THE MASTER AND THE TWELVE

J. W. G. WARD

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Rev. J. W. G. WARD

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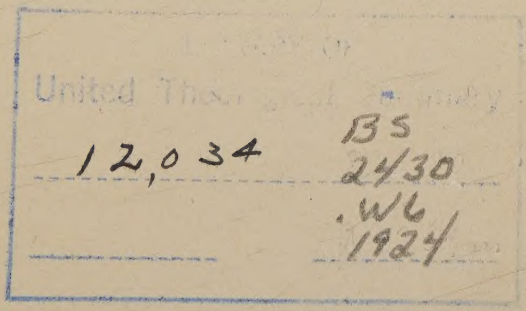
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TO

MY FATHER AND MOTHER

DEVOUT DISCIPLES OF

JESUS CHRIST

FOREWORD

THE materials for these mosaics of the Apostles have been sought in many places, and the figures depicted are mainly those made familiar by literature and art. But just as the craftsmen in those spheres have allowed their imagination to play about their subject, we have taken a like liberty, using the recorded incidents in the career of the Apostles where we could, yet also striving to understand and interpret the character and point of view of each, even when only the scantiest material has been available.

These studies of the Master and the Twelve are published in the sincere hope that they may prove helpful to all who would fain be found in the true apostolical succession of those who love and follow Christ. Guided by the example of these men called to that sacred fellowship, warned by their mistakes, and inspired by their ultimate devotion, may grace be given to us to follow in their train.

J. W. G. WARD.

Emmanuel Church,
Montreal.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I	ANDREW, THE MAN OF LOWLY LOYALTY .	13
II	JOHN, THE MAN OF INTUITIVE LOVE . .	31
III	JAMES, THE INTREPID	52
IV	PETER, THE IMPETUOUS	74
V	PHILIP, THE PRUDENT	100
VI	NATHANAEL, THE DEVOUT	115
VII	MATTHEW, THE MAN OF BUSINESS . .	133
VIII	THOMAS, THE RATIONALIST	153
IX	SIMON, THE ENTHUSIAST	174
X	JUDE, THE INGENUOUS	192
XI	JAMES, THE MAN OF UNRECORDED FIDELITY	202
XII	JUDAS, THE MAN OF PERVERTED POWERS .	214
XIII	THE MASTER OF THE TWELVE . . .	235

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I

ANDREW, THE MAN OF LOWLY LOYALTY

"One of the two that heard John speak was Andrew."

—JOHN 1 : 40.

IT is the lot of the man of average ability to be overshadowed by those who possess more brilliance, and Andrew is a case in point. He is described as Simon Peter's brother. In all the lists of the Apostles given by the Evangelists, Peter is invariably mentioned first, and Andrew is never found among the first three. Yet possibly he was the first to be called to the apostolic company, and it was through him that Peter was brought to know the Saviour for himself. We therefore give to him the premier place in our study, for though he may not have been as distinguished as some, though he has few recorded deeds placed to his credit, he was a man not only worthy of a place in the chosen twelve, but one whose acquaintance is worth cultivating. There are few who possess the powerful personality of Peter, or the spiritual sensitiveness of either James or John. The world

singles out such men for its praise and approbation. They leave the impress of their lives on multitudes. But the quieter souls who lack such gifts and who yet make a lasting contribution to the wealth of the world are often forgotten, passing unrecognised to lonely graves. That is why Andrew merits our sincere regard, and though he needs no praise such as we can bestow, though it is too late to lay our laurels on his tomb, we can at least pay him the compliment of emulating his lowly loyalty to the Master.

Shakespeare says that:

> ". . . 'Tis a common proof,
> That lowliness is young ambition's ladder,
> Whereto the climber-upward turns his face;
> But when he once attains the upmost round,
> He then unto the ladder turns his back,
> Looks in the clouds, scorning the base degrees
> By which he did ascend."

In the case of Andrew that hardly applies. He was not ambitious in the ordinary sense. Had he been so, there would have been good cause for friction and bitterness in the apostolic band, as we shall see. He was, however, keenly desirous of knowing the best and loving the highest. This is apparent when we consider

The Character of Andrew.

He was only a fisherman living in Bethsaida on Lake Galilee, and probably knew little of the great world which had been laid under tribute by Rome. His nights were spent in laborious toil, and his con-

tact with his fellows was possibly limited to the visits he paid to the town in order to sell his catch. Those visits were infrequent. He would most likely leave that part of the business either to Jonas, his father, now too old to work the boat, or to Simon Peter, who, being a keener man of business, would be better able to make a good bargain with the shrewd buyers of the market-place. But what Andrew had seen of life in the town had set him thinking. He discovered that there was a great difference between precept and practice among the religious leaders of his neighbourhood, and the coarse modes of life among the merchants of the bazaars, the flaunting finery and soft luxury of the moneyed classes, heightened his disgust with things as they were. Occasionally he had gone back to the boat wondering why Jehovah tolerated it all, and sometimes he felt that it were a thousand pities that judgment did not fall on those who openly violated the Divine law, and who corrupted the very air with their abominable practices. If one of the old prophets were to come back, Amos, for example, what would he say? What fierce denunciations would he not pour out on those who were supposed to stand for righteousness, and who yet condoned iniquity?

As he spelled out the sacred Scriptures for himself, or listened to the droning voice of the rabbi as they were expounded in the synagogue, Andrew caught himself wondering the more at the Divine indifference, and at the tardiness of Messiah's coming. The same thoughts were with him as he sat at the tiller, looking up at the stars that glimmered above the lake. He was glad to get away from

the pollution of the city and to feel the sweet night breeze on his cheek. He was thrilled by the sense of God's presence out there on the moon-lit waters. But if only that Presence were realised by others, how different life would be for every one!

One day when he had gone to the town, it seemed that his hopes were to be realised. A strange preacher had appeared from no one knew where, and yet there was something familiar about him. Andrew joined the group standing around, listening with amused faces, but he did not hear the gibes that were thrown at this man because of his strange garb and his unkempt appearance. Instead, he listened as one in a dream. Here was the very prophet he had so often pictured to himself—another Amos—whose words were like thongs cutting deeply into the bare flesh or burning the conscience like liquid fire. "Repent . . . the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" Slowly the preacher's meaning penetrated the sailor's soul, and as he returned home, he was convinced that here was one who felt as he felt, to whom the degradation of the professedly devout was an offence to God as well as to man, and who made articulate the deep disgust that had for so long been striving for expression in his heart. There was no sleep for Andrew that night. He seemed to hear, echoing through the darkness, that strong voice, with its authoritative note and its clear conviction of the conscience. "Repent. . . !"

With the first opportunity, Andrew got into personal touch with this man of the wilds, John the Baptist. Though he had to submit to a good deal of banter from his friends for his sudden interest

in religion and not a little criticism from his family, he allied himself with the Baptist as an acknowledged disciple, that he might be further instructed concerning this great One whose way was thus being prepared, and that he might lend his loyal support to this movement towards a better order of things. He did not know it, but like the aged Simeon, he too was waiting for the Consolation of Israel, and he longed for that time when the Messiah would be manifested to the world. He had pondered deeply; now he waited impatiently for that day. Would it dawn with an angry flush in the sky like some days he recalled when the lake was later lashed into fury? Would it be heralded with muttering thunders and blinding lightnings? Would there be a great fanfare of trumpets as the avenging One rode through the land? Many a time he had plied John the Baptist with questions, and as often had he tried to satisfy the impatient Peter as to how long he was going to give such half-hearted help with the boats. But one day, the long anticipated event took place, and yet, like so many things for which we have waited with keen anticipation, it was not quite what was expected. He was walking along by Jordan with the Baptist and John, a fellow-enquirer from the lake. The conversation turned on the old ritual of sacrifice, when suddenly the prophet stopped. They felt the thrill of excitement that swept over him, and following the direction of his outstretched hand, they heard him say, "Behold—the Lamb of God!"

Andrew was conscious of disappointment as he took in the meaning of the Baptist's words. He had thought of the Messiah as one who would come

with glory befitting His high office, but instead, there was one clad just like the people of the countryside. There was no halo about His head. There were no angelic attendants. He moved on with unhurrying pace through the crowds that were dispersing after listening to the preacher from the desert, and none seemed to notice Him. Was John mistaken? No; the answers he gave to Andrew's eager questions made it plain that there was no doubt in his mind regarding the identity of the Christ. But now Andrew was faced with another difficulty. This time it was not an intellectual one, but a personal one born of his loyal soul. How could he secure an immediate interview with this great Master without appearing to desert one to whom he owed so much? Had he been quicker of discernment, had he known John better, such a question would not have arisen for a moment. Yet he was only an untutored fisherman to whom what was unfair or disloyal was repugnant. He made some excuse, and relieved to find that his friend was just as anxious to get away, they set off together in search of the Christ. It was the first time they had felt the Baptist's company uncongenial, the first time they had not been sorry when the time to leave his side had come. Now, it was different. It always is when Christ enters a man's life. All lesser lights pale into insignificance when the sun appears in the radiant dawn, and in that Andrew is not to be regarded as unusual. Yet as they set off, it is probable that Andrew had some misgiving. John the Baptist might understand why they had gone, but would Jesus understand why they had come? Would it not look like presumption for them to speak to Him?

Would He resent their apparent want of restraint, or their lack of loyalty to their teacher? They might have hesitated, as so many of us do, wondering about Christ rather than turning to Him. But their faith was stronger than their fear, and not wishing to compromise Him by being seen talking with friends of the ascetic reformer, or feeling that they could not talk with the intimacy and freedom they desired while curious eyes were on them, they asked, "Teacher, where dwellest Thou?" To their delight Christ invited them both to accompany Him, and that for them was the beginning of days!

It would be about four in the afternoon when they thus met, and though we do not know what was said at that memorable interview, we may be sure that time sped on with wing-tipped feet. As soon as they left Christ's humble lodging, Andrew set off on another quest. He had tried several times to convince his clever brother that there was some truth in the Baptist's message, though beyond awakening curiosity, he had not met with much success. Now he was in a position to prove his point, and he set off to find Peter and tell him the news. It could not wait until next day. As soon as they met, Andrew exclaimed, "We have found the Messiah . . . the Christ."

Peter would listen at first with incredulity, and then with genuine concern as his eyes, peering intently from beneath his bushy brows, scanned the eager and excited face before him. Frankly, he did not believe either in the Baptist or in the supposed fulfilment of ancient prophecies. He was too practical-minded to be led off on these problematical pur-

suits, but he could not doubt the fact that Andrew was manifestly moved by what had happened. Could it be that his brother had lost his mental balance? Peter recalled how strangely Andrew had been acting for some time. More than once he had given sailing directions which had fallen on unheeding ears, and when he had spoken forcibly, Andrew had suddenly stirred like a man waking out of a dream. Besides, although Andrew had been a good enough fellow, he had never evinced any marked interest in religious questions until recent months. Then both his proneness to argue about them, and his anxiety to get ashore on every conceivable occasion showed a definite change. It was not that Peter was slow to put a direct question about his brother's sanity; it was the uselessness of such a course. If he were mad, he would only affirm his sanity with greater vehemence. But while Peter resolved to watch his brother carefully, he decided to assent to the suggestion that the two should seek the Nazarene at the first opportunity, and then he could judge for himself whether this were the Messiah or not. That course was adopted the next day, we know with what results. But between Christ and the two brothers a bond of friendship was immediately forged, and while they did not commit themselves too deeply, it was evident that they were both inclined to be counted among His supporters.

The Call of Andrew

From that time, it appears that Jesus and His new friends met at intervals. Possibly our Lord was frequently away from the district as He pur-

sued alone His early ministry in the towns and villages of Galilee. But the day came when He saw the necessity of having some men under definite tuition so that they might not only aid Him by their companionship and co-operation, but also be fitted for carrying on His mission when His own life should end. We shall deal with the details of that call later, but suffice it to say, that, when the summons to service came, Andrew was as swift to leave the boats and the comparative comfort of home as any of the others, and the reason is not far to seek. He had carefully thought over the events of past days. The more he saw and heard of Jesus, the more convinced he was, in his somewhat slow fashion, that this was indeed the Christ. So when the chance came of abandoning all for the sake of such a Master, he responded with alacrity.

Now it is interesting to note that although he developed considerably as time went on, he was still Andrew, possessing neither the self-confidence of his brother nor the singular responsiveness of either James or John. He does not distinguish himself by any great confession of Christ's deity, nor does his faith flash forth with the sudden light of some revealed truth. In fact, he seldom finds place in the story of those days. It is true that when Christ would feed the hungry multitudes, it was Andrew who called His attention to the boy with the loaves and fishes, but it would seem as though he did so with a measure of diffidence as though he said, "Of course, these cannot be of any use to Thee." Or was it proof again of his loving loyalty to the Lord, knowing that nothing was impossible to Him? In that later day, when the

Greeks came to Philip with a request for a personal interview, the latter referred the matter to Andrew. But what was the reason? Why did not Philip go to one of the principal three? Surely, because he knew Andrew to be not only sympathetic towards such a request, but because he had always found him so open-hearted and consistently kind.

The call which took Andrew from the peaceful life of the lake lifted him to a fellowship in which the gracious and noble qualities of his nature found satisfaction. He had long thought of such a one as Jesus, who would set up the standard of life as God would have it, and who, while being the implacable foe of meanness and deceit, would also sympathise with the aspirations of the heart. Deep called unto deep in his soul. But the lure of the heights was more potent still.

Keble urges a like faith upon the Christian:

> "First seek thy Saviour out, and dwell
> Beneath the shadow of His roof,
> Till thou hast scann'd His features well,
> And known Him for the Christ by proof. . . .
>
> "Then, potent with the spell of Heaven,
> Go, and thine erring brother gain,
> Entice him home to be forgiven,
> Till he, too, see his Saviour plain."

All this helps us to gauge

The Calibre of Andrew.

If he were a man of such fine qualities, why was it that he never found place in the first three? It

is unthinkable that Christ had favourites in the band of His disciples, and yet, when the Master entered that home which was shadowed by sorrow, where the little daughter of Jairus lay dead, we find Peter, James, and John, but no Andrew. When our Lord stood there on that wondrous Mount of Transfiguration, and the supernal glory which He had voluntarily laid aside for a time gleamed in His sacred face, and made even His raiment dazzlingly beautiful, exceeding the whiteness of the Alpine peaks when caressed by the sun, the same three were there, feasting their eyes on the spectacle, but there was no Andrew. When that tragic hour of agony had to be faced in the Garden, Christ took the three aside, feeling He could count on their prayerful sympathy while He communed with the great Father; but the others were left where the deep shadows lurked, and Andrew was with them. Only once do we find him included with his more distinguished friends. The Master had been foretelling the destruction of Jerusalem, and then the three with Andrew ventured to ask Him privately about this stupendous event, saying pointedly, "Tell us, when shall these things be?" Why should he have been so consistently excluded from the inner circle? The question seems natural enough to us. It may have presented itself to Andrew, but if it did, he gave no hint of it. The fact is that while he was not one of the three, he made a splendid fourth. In that lies his greatest glory. He was a man of lowly loyalty. It was enough for him that Christ had considered him worthy of a place among the twelve chosen friends, and that for Andrew was honour enough. Perhaps he

realised what may have escaped us: There was a significance in the number chosen. The Twelve were to be the head of a new Twelve Tribes, and to them would be committed judgment in the day of Messiah's dominion, but just as the sons of Jacob had each his allotted territory and his own peculiar individuality, so each of the twelve Apostles had his personal part to play in the founding of the new Kingdom.

This is full of suggestiveness. It is true that Andrew was not able to do what some of the others did, but it is also true that he could do what they could not. He must have changed out of all knowledge under the gracious example and influence of the Master, and yet he was still Andrew. His lowliness of mind and loyal love were his distinguishing traits. He was the first to find Christ, but he did not presume on that. While it was through him that Peter was brought to the Master, he did not claim pre-eminence or seniority. On the contrary, because he was not among the three intimates of Christ, he yet proved that he could fill a subordinate position splendidly. He might have failed as first, yet as fourth he proved fine. We need not enter into the truth or otherwise of the various traditions that have gathered about Andrew's subsequent activities. Eusebius affirmed that Andrew preached in Scythia, and that afterwards he was crucified by Ægeas, the pro-consul of Patræ, being bound with thongs to the cross that his sufferings might be prolonged. Legend also has it that St. Regulus brought an arm of Andrew to Scotland, where he landed at the town which is now known as St. Andrew's, and from which sprang the fact

that the Saltire is the emblem of Scotland and St. Andrew her patron saint. Still, this needs to be said. The world can never repay its debt to those who, with fine devotion to the good, and with self-effacing service, have permanently blessed the race. Moses carried his gigantic task almost to completion, but how many can recall without looking them up, the names of his father and mother who risked everything to save his life? Livingstone's body rests among the honoured dead of Westminster Abbey, but his wife, to whom he owed so much, who was the inspiration of his life and who shared so many perils in the dark Continent, lies buried in the jungle. So it was with Andrew. He was content to use his limited powers for the Saviour's sake, and in quiet loyalty to Christ's cause to spend himself as opportunity came to him. What is the result? His influence, fragrant as a rose and yet as indefinable, abides to this hour. It enables us to see that even the man and woman of few talents, denied the chance of doing glorious deeds, may yet live a life that achieves true greatness, and in lowly loyalty to the Lord, can bless the world. It inspires the feeblest with new strength. It nerves the heart for greater determination to do the good that may be possible, assured that in Christ's eyes, the lowly soul is as a pearl of great price, and the sacrifice of the contrite in heart is acceptable in His sight. And a like call to discipleship comes to us. The author of *There Is a Green Hill* wrote:

> "As of old St. Andrew heard it
> By the Galilean Lake,
> Turned from home, and toil, and kindred,
> Leaving all for Thy dear sake."

So we are summoned to the side of Christ. We may not be granted a place of eminence where the plaudits of the crowd will cheer our hearts. We may not be given a task that offers us the opportunity we feel we deserve. But Christ wants us for what we are and what we may become under His gracious influence. There are great and important duties assigned to the leaders of life and thought, but much depends on the calibre of their followers. Great strategists may plan the campaign, but it is the rank and file which fight the battles and win the victory. Peter, James, and John, were of indisputable worth to Jesus Christ, but so was the less gifted Andrew, a man who never failed nor faltered, but whose life was lived in humble devotion to his Lord.

We can do as much. Such service is not only required by our Divine Master, but it is also within our scope, and though none may acclaim our deeds, they will not miss the Master's commendation. It is not only the recorded achievements of life by which a man's greatness may be reckoned, but the far-reaching effects of them and the influences he sets in operation. It was no small victory for Andrew to have overcome his brother's reluctance to meet Christ for himself, but who could have foreseen the consequences of his patience and pertinacity? Even though he may have cherished a great admiration for the stout-hearted Simon, and have been proud of the skill and resource which the sudden squalls of the lake tested many a time, Andrew could never have guessed that there were such sterling qualities lying inert in his brother's soul as those afterwards manifested under the tuition of

Christ. He could not foresee the great part Peter was to play as the leader of the Apostolic company, and the heroic figure which dominated the early Church. Nay, when he brought his brother to Christ, he had no idea that his words of persuasion or entreaty were to have such stupendous results. The value of personal service for the individual is like the stone we fling into the sleeping waters of a pond. It sinks from view in a moment, but the circles widen and widen till at last the farthest margin is reached. Though the cause may seem inadequate, the effects are indisputable. When that godly woman, the wife of a merchant in London, spoke to one of her husband's apprentices, and persuaded him to accompany her to church instead of spending the evening with his wild companions, she meant well. Yet she accomplished far more than she thought. The youth felt the Divine Presence. He heard the call of Christ. He resolved later to devote himself to the cause of the Kingdom, and to that kindly woman, the world owes John Williams, the great missionary martyr of Erromanga.

When Henry Ward Beecher was at the height of his power, not only thrilling the congregations at the famous Plymouth Church, but making the soul of America tingle with his wonderful oratory, a man on whom heavy loads had been thrust entered the sanctuary. He had come with the question in his heart, "Is there any word from the Lord?" It is doubtful if Beecher knew he was present; he certainly did not anticipate his visit. But as the prophet poured out his soul in passionate pleading for the oppressed, as he showed the rights

of the whole human race secured by the sacrifice of Calvary, the man before him knew that his cry had been answered. The word had come from the Lord and it was directed to him. Abraham Lincoln felt that, as surely as Moses heard the call from the burning bush, he had heard the Divine voice, and he went forth that night to declare war on those who upheld slavery. While the conflict entailed also the question of the Union of the States, it had this deep moral significance, and through the dark days that followed until Lincoln signed the Treaty which set the slave for ever free, he was sustained by the vision he had seen and the voice he heard. Then he cried, "I promised my God I would do it, and I have done it!" It is another instance of the far-reaching effects of a word spoken in the cause of Christ, bringing another into line with His purpose.

Thus if Andrew never achieved anything else in life, there is this to place to his undying credit, that he was the means of bringing such a great soul to Christ as Peter proved himself to be. And with what encouragement can we regard that one act! We cannot tell how our humblest service may be blessed. Some kindly word, some disinterested effort to aid another soul may mean untold good to the world. No loyal life is without its crown of laurel. No service rendered for Christ's sake, even if denied its meed of praise now, shall fail of its reward. Long after the word is spoken, long after the deed is forgotten, their influences will be felt and their effects seen. It must have been some such thought that prompted Longfellow to sing:

"I shot an arrow into the air,
It fell to earth, I know not where;
For, so swiftly it flew, the sight
Could not follow it in its flight.

"I breathed a song into the air,
It fell to earth, I know not where;
For who has sight so keen and strong,
That it can follow the flight of song?

"Long, long afterward, in an oak
I found the arrow, still unbroke;
And the song, from beginning to end,
I found again in the heart of a friend."

If further proof were needed we have but to recall that Richard Sibbes wrote a book entitled "The Bruised Reed," a copy of which was sold to a farmer. His son read it, and found the way to Christ. He was Richard Baxter, who eventually became the famous divine, and was then minister of New Court, of which the writer occupied the same honoured position. Baxter wrote, among other works, "A Call to the Unconverted," which was read by a young man who was led through it to consecrate himself to Christ. That was Philip Doddridge. He in turn wrote a book, "The Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul," and this was blessed to the conversion of William Wilberforce, the liberator of the slave. So link by link the golden chains which bind men in that glorious bondage to Christ which means fullest liberty, are forged, and the first of the apostolic company to discover the power of self-renouncing service for others was Andrew, the loyal-hearted. The love of

every disciple can find expression in this way, and the confidence that rings in Browning's cheery lines shall continually nerve him to further effort for the sake of Christ.

"There shall never be one lost good! What was shall live
as before;
The evil is null, is naught, is silence implying sound . . .
On earth the broken arcs; in the heaven, a perfect round."

II

JOHN, THE MAN OF INTUITIVE LOVE

"This is the disciple which testifieth of these things."

—JOHN 21:24.

THERE are some things men never forget. Memory engraves them so deeply upon the tablets of the soul, that they remain as long as life lasts. John never forgot that first meeting with Jesus. Many a year afterwards, the details of that day stood out clearly in his mind, and as we read his record, we can see the Baptist and his two friends, the former bronzed with the glare of the sun and the unfettered winds of the desert, turning their eyes to the Lamb of God as He walked by Jordan's banks. One of the two disciples of the Baptist was Andrew, but although the other was left unnamed, there can be no reasonable doubt as to his identity. "This is the disciple which testifieth of these things."

We know him as "the disciple whom Jesus loved," the one who was privileged to recline the closest at the Paschal Feast, the one with whom our Lord seemed to have most in common. Yet in order to understand the man, we must look more closely at the portrait etched by the Synoptists and the lines added by John himself. As a general description we may call him the man of intuitive

love, but there are many strange qualities in this great soul that only patient study can reveal.

The Preliminary Period

of his life must be left largely to the imagination, but we can form a fairly accurate idea of those early years from what we know of him in later days. John, the son of Zebedee and Salome, lived in Bethsaida, the same town as Andrew, and like him, he was engaged in the fishing industry. He had a good position, for, from the records we ascertain that Zebedee had several employés, and probably a modest fleet of fishing vessels. But John had a soul that soared. Though he never gave his father cause for complaint regarding his work, it is evident that he was one who was not only deeply spiritual in his way of looking at things, but also remarkably susceptible to religious influences. He was ruled more by his heart than his head in those early days, and when the Baptist appeared in the vale of Jordan, there was something in his picturesque appearance, with the unshorn head superbly erect, the bare, weather-tanned breast, and the rough garment of camel's hair, that made an irresistible appeal to the youthful fisher. He had never seen any one so unconventional. He had never heard preaching so convincing. Here were the note of urgency, the air of reality that compelled attention. It was so different from the wearisome repetitions of religious truth he had heard in the synagogue. The Baptist was a man who said what he believed, and who believed what he said. And when John listened to that wonderful

voice, in which the echoing sounds of the winds that rent the mountains, or the thunders that bellowed in the hills, could be heard, he was enthralled. Like all young people, there was a strain of the quixotic in his make-up, and when the prophet attacked ancient iniquity and hurled defiance at the hoary head of hypocrisy, the youth was captivated. When John declared, without the slightest hesitation, that he was the forerunner of the great Messiah whose kingdom must soon be founded, he who had seen the men running before the carriage of some important government official, grasped at once the significance of the hour. Moreover, the fact that many reviled the wild prophet of the desert, that he was apparently alone in his mission, further appealed to this impulsive heart, and having talked over things with his friend Andrew, the two became firm allies of the desert preacher. If any one had asked John why he had thrown in his lot with this strange figure, the probability is that he would have been unable to say. He felt that this was the right thing to do, and this was a man worth supporting. He was guided more by intuition than by logic, but then, the intuition of love is sometimes a surer guide in things of the soul than bare reason.

The Parting of the Ways

When he saw Jesus for the first time, there was a similar leaping forth of the heart in His direction. Again, we affirm the chances are that John would not have been able to explain why he was so eager to leave the Baptist and to follow this new Master, but as the compass needle is drawn un-

mistakably to its pole, the soul of the young disciple was attracted by Jesus. He had been ready to hasten off on the instant, but his sensitive nature shrank from giving his master pain. Yet when he found that Andrew was similarly affected, he hesitated no longer. It was the parting of the ways, but he knew that he was being impelled to take the step which might mean severance for all time from John the Baptist, and which would possibly mean revolutionising his mode of life and thought. But he could not stay to debate the point. The Baptist had plainly pointed out this Nazarene as the Lamb of God, and the soul of the youth was fired with desire to know Him personally.

The two quickly overtook Christ, but in their haste, they had not considered how they were to address Him. It might not do to use John's designation; perhaps that was as yet a secret. So they blurted out their question, "Rabbi, where dwellest Thou?" It must have seemed an unfitting title to give Him when they thought it over, but John was naturally one who acted first and considered things afterwards, and intuitively he felt that this term was at least non-committal, though it might not be entirely suitable. But in that Divine company, whatever misgivings he might have had were dispersed as the mists before the rising sun. He does not tell us what passed, but at least his conversation with Christ convinced him that again he had been right in following what he felt to be an impulse of God, and from that hour, Christ was for him the light of life. Nor was it all on John's side. Christ was apparently just as impressed with the impulsive, enquiring youth, for at once between

the two there sprang up an intimacy that is beautiful to behold, and John became the disciple whom Jesus loved. Every possible opportunity of being with Jesus was eagerly seized by this ardent disciple, and even when others were called to become followers of the new Teacher, it was evident that none understood Jesus better, or had a deeper sympathy with Him, than John, the son of Zebedee. They accompanied Him to the marriage in Cana, as His acknowledged friends, and possibly when they found that He was going to Jerusalem for the feast, they arranged to go together.

Meanwhile, things had been going ill with the Baptist. He was imprisoned for his outspokenness, and then it would appear that our Lord decided on a more extensive mission, proclaiming the Kingdom. So the day came when John and some of the others were called to leave their secular toil, and become His companions in this great crusade. Thus John faced again the parting of the ways. In spite of the remonstrance of Zebedee and the counsel of his friends, John decided on this quixotic course. He could not argue the point. He did not know just why it was the right thing for him to give up his prospects, and abandon the business that his father had so laboriously built up in the hope that his sons would one day take the reins. All he knew was that Christ had called him, and his soul demanded obedience to that imperative summons. In that he was like Henry Martyn. That gifted graduate of Cambridge had the world at his feet. He had completed a brilliant course, and before him lay a career of exceptional promise. There was literally nothing he could not do if he were dis-

posed to give his strength to its accomplishment, but out of the night of heathendom came a cry for succour; from Christ Himself came the call for service. Martyn knew that the Saviour needed him in India, and he resolved to go. His friends brought the weight of their influence to bear on him, for the quest seemed absurd, but he was immovable. His fiancée, hoping to succeed where they had failed, did all she could to dissuade him from the project, even pointing out that unless he altered his decision, the engagement must be terminated, but though he loved her deeply, he loved Christ and duty more. He seemed to say:

> "I hear a voice you cannot hear,
> Which says I must not stay;
> I see a hand you cannot see,
> Which beckons me away."

Thus it was with John. He might lose all things for Christ's sake, but to him there was nothing comparable to that sweet companionship, and he followed where love led.

The Personality That Impelled

him to take this step was the Christ for whom the world had been waiting, though its longing had not been articulate. Yet there were some who had been trained to look for that day of Messiah's coming with a feeling that then joy, which had so long been foreign to their national life, would return. Andrew was one of these. John was another. His passionate young soul was s vayed by the prophecies of those Scriptures in which he had been nurtured.

The ideal is proverbially the possession of youth. He had seen things as they were under Roman rule, and comparing the present with the past, he must have longed for those dashing days in which David led his men along the ways of adventurous daring towards freedom and life. He must have dreamed many a time of the stately majesty of Solomon, and wondered why the ancient glories had departed from the sceptre of Judah. But comparing the present with the future, all his dreams were surpassed. The day was coming when God would redeem Israel, when the power of the Eternal would be manifested, and the graphic pen pictures that the prophets had drawn depicting Emmanuel's reign must have thrilled his very soul. Is it any wonder then that, when the Baptist confidently recognised Christ as the fulfilment of the prophecy, this impressionable heart should have made immediate response? On the contrary, it would have been surprising had John remained unmoved. He had so long compared the actual with the ideal that when he met Christ, he saw the difference between the ideal and the actual. Here was one who filled his soul with ecstasy. The two friends had called Him, Rabbi, but the moment they entered into conversation with Him, they knew that was no adequate designation. He spoke to them without a suggestion of patronage. He had no air of the superior stooping to converse with them. There was no semblance of pride, nor of that unctuousness that so often accompanied religion. Quite the reverse. He answered their questions as one who was glad to impart any information they sought, nor was there on their part any feeling of restraint in His

company. He had removed all that in His first word in which He evidently recognised them as seekers. And those first impressions were only deepened as time went on. John had verily found One whom he could trust to the fullest extent, and to whom his inmost soul answered. The matchless wisdom of Christ as teacher, the profound tenderness that marked all His dealings with the forlorn and fettered souls of men, His wonderful works of mercy, were consistent with the Son of God, and though there were many things John could not understand, he felt that at least he understood the Master. He might well have said as Carlyle did centuries later:

"Look on our divinest Symbol: on Jesus of Nazareth, and His Life, and His Biography, and what followed therefrom. Higher has the human Thought not yet reached: this is Christianity and Christendom; a Symbol of quite perennial, infinite character; whose significance will ever demand to be anew inquired into, and anew made manifest."

John could not but love Him with all the passion of his intense nature, and what was better still, he felt that his love was returned. He had found the Captain of his soul.

Yet if all this be true, there are some strange and disquieting facts in the Gospel story that seem inconsistent. Why did Jesus name John and his brother Boanerges, that is, Sons of Thunder, if he was such a gentle, loving soul? Why was it that John showed such intolerance and bigotry when he came upon another who was engaged in a similar work, reporting the incident with apparent pride—"Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy

name, and he followed not us: and we forbade him because he followeth not us"? Why did he want to call down fire upon the churlish Samaritan village which denied its hospitality to Christ and His companions? Why did he and his brother come with that ambitious request, "Grant unto us that we may sit, one on Thy right hand, and the other on Thy left hand, in Thy glory"? It is true that in Matthew's account of the incident, Salome, their mother, preferred the request, emboldened by the family relationship which may have existed, for Salome is thought to be one of Mary's sisters. Yet that does not absolve either John or James from complicity in the matter, for they supported the plea with their acquiescence. What is stranger still, it was this imperfect, vehement youth whom Christ loved. Why was it?

Imperfection Is No Barrier to Privilege

Christ saw him as a disciple in process of development, a soul in the shaping. Were one seeking proof of the incomparable compassion of Christ, His belief in the worth of a human soul, one could find it here. The character of John was as yet immature. He did things that must have grieved the Master over and over again, and said things that must have struck a discordant note constantly, and yet Jesus loved him. He saw John, as He sees us, through the eyes of love. Love sees the end as well as the beginning. It sees the oak in the acorn, the bird in the egg, the angel imprisoned in "this muddy vesture of decay." Referring to the forbidding of the exorcist, Dr. A. B. Bruce

says, "It may surprise some to find *him,* the apostle of love, consenting to so uncharitable a deed; but such surprise is founded on superficial views of his character, as well as on ignorance of the laws of spiritual growth. John is not now what he will be, but differs from his future self, as much as an orange in its second year differs from the same orange in its third final year of growth. The fruit of the Spirit will ultimately ripen in this disciple into something very sweet and beautiful; but meantime it is green, bitter, and fit only to set the teeth on edge. Devoted in mind, tender and intense in his attachment to Jesus, scrupulously conscientious in all his actions, he is even now; but he is also bigoted, intolerant, ambitious."

Christ looks on us not as we are, but as we may become when the work of grace is complete. That is why John was admitted not only to the inner circle of the three, but was given the premier place in Christ's affections. He had been chosen for his spiritual sensitiveness. That very impressionableness would be one of his greatest assets in later days. That vehemence, when the flame burned more brightly, would make him love the good with intense devotion, though he might hate evil with passionate loathing. And that intuitiveness that led him to choose the highest and love the noblest would mark him as one of the greatest of the apostolic company. He was not the only man in whom hate and love, or the natural and the spiritual, were found in such striking contrast. It seems almost incredible that David, who could write that Twenty-third Psalm, could also be guilty of a sin so heinous as that which brought Uriah to his death and David

himself to the polluting mire, and yet the Fifty-first Psalm reveals the depths to which he knew he had sunk. It is wonderful to see the change wrought in the pitiless, persecuting Saul, making him the tireless, triumphant missionary of that Cross whose Lord he had once reviled. But there is no limit to Christ's saving grace, and to this we trace the change that came eventually over John. Christ loved him. Christ believed in him. That is why the Master chose John to be one of the three who should be closest to His side, who should enter the house where the ruler's daughter lay wrapped in the slumber of death, who should stand with Him on the sacred Mount, who should share with Him the painful vigil of the Garden. That is why John was permitted to be nearest to the Lord at the Last Supper, and why he was known to the others as "that disciple whom Jesus loved." But it must not be thought that there was any favouritism in this. The fact that the rest of the company apparently accepted John's primacy without question helps us to get over that difficulty. There was a deep sympathy between Jesus and John that seemed perfectly natural. For one thing, it is possible that they were about the same age. Art almost invariably depicts the disciple of this time as a young man, possibly the youngest of the twelve, and that may have been one explanation of the bond that existed between Master and pupil. We have it recorded of the young ruler who came asking the way of life that "Christ looking on him, loved him." Why, because he was rich? That is not like Christ. Because he was a ruler? That can scarcely be the reason. Because he was young, and

had the optimism and enthusiasm of youth as his portion, because his life was unsullied and his days unspent? That is more likely. The fact is, Christ saw the boundless opportunities that youth affords to the man who will give himself to the sway of the spiritual, and while there was work for each of the twelve to do, while each had his own personal contribution to make to the Master's mission, John possessed possibly what the rest lacked—the inestimable gift of youth. When others of the company would inevitably lay down their work, John would still be able to carry it on for some years longer. When their powers flagged, and their eyes grew dim, he would still possess the vision and enthusiasm necessary for the establishment of the Kingdom. So, imperfect though John was at this stage of his career, he was permitted privileges that were meant to fit him for fine service in the future.

There is the other side of the matter. John was permitted to enter that circle and to take that intimate place in the Saviour's heart because not only had Christ chosen him, but he had chosen Christ. He might have spurned the proffered privileges. He might have resisted the gracious influences that were wooing him from his intolerance, vehemence, and self-centred ambitions, just as an organism sometimes fails to adapt itself to its new environment or as the plant allows the passages that convey life to a given leaf to silt up so that it turns yellow and dies. Instead of that, like a diligent pupil, he learned by his mistakes. He profited by the opportunities that came his way. The work of grace, which is often so gradual and undiscerned, made the desert rejoice and blossom

as the rose. And his progress was the Master's encouragement.

The difference between Christ and ourselves is no more clearly seen than in the patience He displays, and the impatience with which we regard our fellow men. We want results at once. We plant the sapling and would like to gather luscious fruit the same season. Yet when James wants to illustrate the virtue of patience he says, "Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it." That is the attitude Jesus manifested towards His friends. Yet we wish John had played a more valiant part. Secure in the fact that he had a friend in the High Priest's Palace, he obtained permission for Peter to pass the guard and see what was happening, but he himself was not running any great risk in being there. He may not have remained long, or if he did, then he was careful not to be in any prominent position, for when Jesus turned and looked on Peter after that base denial, He did not see John. But at Calvary, the noble qualities of the disciple were seen. His affectionate heart went out to the stricken mother standing there by the Cross. At first, lurking on the fringe of the crowd, John had hesitated about going nearer, but the sight of a woman's grief was too much for him, and he had joined the group, flinging his arm about that form quivering with sorrow, and with a surging tenderness that brought words of comfort from secret springs in his soul, he had done what he could to sustain her in that terrible hour. In spite of His own sufferings, the incident had not gone unnoticed by Christ. "When Jesus therefore saw His mother,

and the disciple standing by, whom He loved . . . then saith He to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour, that disciple took her unto his own home." (John 19:26.)

That mark of confidence shown by Jesus may have been John's salvation. Between the hour of the arrest and this time, he had been passing through a period of bitter humiliation and self-criticism. He had enjoyed privileges that had not been given to the rest, but how had he repaid his Lord? It did not matter to John that the others had deserted the Master when storm-clouds burst. His main concern was that he himself had been so faithless. Privileges carry corresponding responsibilities. He who had been so close to Christ had been furthest from Him in spirit and service. When in that searching hour in the Upper Room the Saviour had seen their reluctance to minister to one another, and had washed their feet, had John been any better than the rest? When He had asked the three to watch with Him in the darkness of Gethsemane, had he not slept just as his companions? When the Lord had been led off to Caiaphas, John had seen the gleaming garment of his Master in the midst of the soldiery, and yet he had let them go without raising a hand to support the Saviour's cause. He had kept in the shadows, though his heart was prompting him to rush in and share the death these cruel callous leaders were demanding from Pilate, and when at last, he saw Jesus issuing from the Prætorium to face the howling execrations of the mob, saw Him staggering under the weight of the Cross, and then falling on the cobbled stones of the way, John had felt he could

do no other than take his place beside his beloved Lord. But even while he hesitated, a swarthy stranger was pressed into the service of the soldiery, and John's chance had gone! Gone for ever! Why had he failed so shamefully? It was not that the others were no better than he, it was rather that he was a thousand times worse than they! Had not the Master said, "To whom much is given, of him shall be much required"? How much had he received in the way of loving trust, patient instruction, generous forgiveness! And he had requited it all with denial in deed if not in word.

At least, though John had lost faith in himself, Christ still believed in him or He would not have given him that sacred trust in the tragic hour, and when he knew the Lord had risen again, for a time his heart surged with new hope of proving his love once more, only to be filled with greater remorse for the sorry part he had played. He was unworthy of such a Master! He was undeserving of such divine pity! So when Peter and five others suggested going back to the lake, John decided to accompany them. But everything was against them. It could not be that they had lost their old efficiency in handling the nets; it must have been, that they were still outside the circle of duty. They toiled all night long, shifting their fishing ground and flinging the nets with their old-time skill, but it was useless. When day broke, they had taken nothing. They decided to return, and with the glimmering of the morning sun on the water, John's intuitive soul rather than his discerning eyes recognised a figure awaiting them. But that was impossible! The command to throw out the nets again

now convinced the head of what the heart had been sure of before, and John whispered to Peter what he had known for long, "It is the Lord!"

The Pursuit of the Divine Purpose

From that time, John knew how great was the forgiving love of his Lord. He hesitated no more. After the stirring events of Pentecost, we see him with Peter bringing health to the impotent man, and declaring with fine courage the faith that brought blessing and strength to his own life. When the two were arrested and brought before the Sanhedrin, there was no fear in their faces. Both had been forgiven much, and therefore both loved much. He journeyed later to Samaria to assist those who had come under the spell of the Gospel, and A.D. 50 he was again in Jerusalem.

As may be easily understood, there is nothing in his own writings about his subsequent life. He was anxious above all things that his Master should have the pre-eminence, and we must depend on tradition regarding John's later activities. But it is a well-grounded fact that he went to reside in Ephesus, for this city had become, under the preaching of Paul, the centre of Christian work at that time. Jerusalem was too full of opposition, while Rome was as yet unreached to any appreciable extent. Ephesus afforded opportunities of spreading the Kingdom, not only by means of its intercourse with the great cities of the Empire, but also because there were schools of learning which must be permeated with the leaven of the Christian

Evangel. Here we find the latent talent which Christ called forth being utilised to the full under the inspiration of the Divine Spirit. Although John's authorship of the Fourth Gospel has been challenged, the consensus of opinion is now that this Gospel is of much earlier date than some critics have affirmed, and it looks as though Lightfoot's opinion were justified. He said, "We may look forward to the time when it will be held discreditable to the reputation of any critic of sobriety and judgment to assign to this Gospel any later date than the end of the first century or the beginning of the second."

When we read the marvellous Prologue, the wonderful fourteenth chapter, of which the devout heart never wearies and in which the most aged saint ever finds new comfort and help, we are enthralled. Dr. John Watson used to say of the minister, "If he ask the sick what Scripture they desire, it is only a form, for there is one chapter that every man and woman wants to hear in great sorrow, or when the shadow is falling. The leaf which contains the fourteenth of St. John's Gospel should be made movable in our Bibles, in order that it might be replaced every ten years. By the time a man has got to middle age that leaf is thinning, and by old age it is only a brown film that is barely legible, and must be gently handled. Yet with every reading—say six times a week—the pastor notices that it yields some new revelation of the Divine Love and the Kingdom of Heaven. If one is sinking into unconsciousness, and you read, 'In my Father's house are many mansions,' he will come back and whisper 'mansions,' and he will wait

till you finish: 'where I am, there ye may be also,' before he dies in peace." And though we cannot put it as beautifully as that gifted writer does, that is just what we believe about not only that chapter, but also the whole book.

This much is plain, as Dr. Adeney points out with considerable cogency. The writer was a Jew, for he repeatedly quotes the Old Testament and explains several events as illustrative of statements made by the prophets, and he not only shows himself familiar with the customs of his people, but also that he shares their Messianic hopes. He was a Palestinian Jew, for he proves his knowledge of the topography of the land, and carefully discriminates between, for example, Bethany nigh unto Jerusalem, and Bethany beyond Jordan with details about Sychar, Ephraim, the Pavement and Golgotha. He was a contemporary Jew, for he not only understood the feeling of the people at that time, describing the current dislike of the Pharisees and Sadducees, but he was also an eye witness of the events of Christ's ministry. He was one of the inner circle of the disciples. No other man known to us fulfils all the requirements of this careful description of the author of the Fourth Gospel, and comparing it with the records of the Synoptics, it is just the type of Gospel we would be led to expect from John as we know him, no longer vehement and impulsive, but subdued by the sense of his own privileges, his temporary failure, and the overwhelming love of his Lord. A careful study of the question in the light of modern scholarship confirms us in the opinion that John, the son of Zebedee, "is the disciple which testifieth these things."

When again we turn to the Revelation and read his glowing imagery and revel in his word-painting, when we hear the glorious music of the fifth chapter, or try to take in the superb scenes described in the nineteenth or the twenty-first chapter, we cannot but ask how is it possible for one who was described by men of his own day to be unlearned and ignorant to write thus? Too much weight must not be given to that description. For one thing, it did not err on the side of generosity, and for another, any man who was not a graduate of one of the recognised schools of the rabbis was rated as unlearned. If the ploughman of Ayrshire could crave as he did:

> "Gie me ae spark o' Nature's fire!
> That's a' the learning I desire;
> Then though I trudge, through dub an' mire
> At pleugh or cart,
> My Muse, though hamely in attire,
> May touch the heart,"

surely there is sufficient explanation of a man's gifts when there is added the divine aid of the Holy Spirit. John was in touch with the teachings of Ephesus about the Logos. He had lived close to the bosom of Nature, and something of the varied music of her magnificent orchestra had entered his soul. Moreover, he had spent those years in fellowship with the greatest Teacher of the race. Is that not enough? Grace had wrought this wondrous change in the one-time Boanerges.

There is a beautiful tradition for which we are indebted to Eusebius that John was interested in a young man who became a Christian, but who afterwards drifted back to his old ways. John made

enquiries about him, and found that he had joined a band of brigands. There seemed no way of reaching him till the Apostle formed the plan of allowing himself to be captured by this band, and when he found his convert, pleaded with him to abandon his evil course, and so won him back to Christ.

John's banishment to Patmos, that rock-strewn isle in the Ægean, where he was gladdened by the vision of his Master's ultimate victory is mentioned by Tertullian who refers it to the persecution that broke out under one of the edicts of Domitian. It is probable that John was ultimately released under Nerva, and that he returned to Ephesus. There we have a description of him given by Jerome, carried in extreme age into the midst of his friends, and repeating constantly as only an old man would, "Little children, love one another." His disciples asked him why he said this so often, and his reply was, "It is our Lord's command, and if we fulfil this, we have fulfilled all things."

The development of this great soul is not only a striking example of what can happen to a man when he is brought under the influence of Jesus Christ, but it also proves that the world's standard of values is sometimes wrong. It is something to achieve fame, to be able to acquire wealth and position, or to shape the decrees of state, but it is an infinitely nobler thing to live in the love of Jesus Christ and to have imbibed something of His Spirit. John's lasting greatness was not in what he did, not in what he wrote, but in this fact that he was the disciple whom Jesus loved and who might have said, with blind George Matheson:

"O Love, that wilt not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in Thee;
I give Thee back the life I owe,
That in Thine ocean depths its flow
May richer, fuller be.

"O Cross that liftest up my head,
I dare not ask to fly from thee;
I lay in dust life's glory dead,
And from the ground there blossoms red
Life that shall endless be."

III

JAMES, THE INTREPID

"He saw James, the son of Zebedee."
—MARK 1 : 19.

WE would find the records aggravatingly inadequate concerning the Twelve were it not for the fact that we remember they were meant to tell the story not of the Twelve but of their Master. Yet we cannot but feel that we should like to have more information than they afford us concerning James who was chosen by Jesus to be one of the inner circle of the Apostles. The Fourth Gospel does not name him at all, and even in the other three, the references are of the most meagre description. Still from the scant material we may gather much. If Cuvier could reconstruct the probable size and shape of some extinct animal from a single bone, we can surely understand in part, at any rate, this man who was distinguished in the company of the Apostles as the most intrepid of the whole band.

The name which Jesus gave to James and his brother, calling them the Sons of Thunder, reveals much, for just as our Lord did not dull the palm

> . . . "With entertainment
> Of each new-hatch'd, unfledged comrade,"

but carefully chose those who were to be entrusted with carrying on His work, so He did not give a name without its being some indication of the char-

acter of the man who bore it. To be a Son of Thunder was surely not, as some ancient commentators have suggested, that James was a man possessing tremendous powers of oratory, but rather that he was, as we have already described him, one of fiery and intrepid spirit, willing to take the lead in some perilous pursuit, and brooking no counsels that would restrain his ardour when once embarked on a course he felt to be right.

From the details available, we know him to be the elder brother of John, and the son of Zebedee and Salome. He, like his brother, was engaged in the fishing industry of Galilee, and it is evident that the family enjoyed considerable prosperity. But while John was also given the same designation, it would seem that though possessing the same intense nature, James had an individuality all his own. John had become a follower of the Baptist, but James seems to have held aloof, though he must have had a good reason for doing so. What was it? When his younger brother became so greatly interested in the message and mission of the Baptist, it must have caused some concern to James, for the two were not only partners in the father's business, but, from what we see of them later, were often found in each other's company, and sharing the same pursuits. Why then was it that James did not ally himself with John the Baptist? It must surely have been that he, the man of action, felt that the hour had not yet come. He was interested in the supposed imminence of the Messiah's coming. He was too much of a Jew not to be so. But then, days passed into weeks, and while it was true that the preaching of this great soul was mak-

ing a profound impression on the populace, James saw no indication that his words were likely to be fulfilled. Had he done so, one so intense would have flung in his lot with the new party of reformers without hesitation. When that day came, he would be ready, but meanwhile, there was work to be done, the business to carry on, and with the indulgence of an elder brother, he did not question the choice John had made, nor did he remonstrate with him about his frequent absences with the preacher.

As has been the case many a time, the hour brought the man. When Jesus saw James at work that day by the lake, and called to him, and when James saw that his two friends Andrew and Peter were in His company, he knew the time for action had come. He did not question the call. He was not the man to waste words in asking for reasons. He immediately responded, and figuratively, but none the less actually, like Cæsar when he crossed the Rubicon, James burned his boats behind him. The old craft had its appeal, and he valued the comparative certainty of the livelihood which the lake presented, but with that insistent call in his ears he had to take up the challenge, whatever it might mean, and dare the consequences. That reveals his character. Perhaps James did not know himself to be quite like that, but later events prove that it was a reliable indication of the real self. He was the man of fearless intrepidity, and instant action. Although he had been called to the fellowship of the Apostles, and though he is frequently named with the other two who were Christ's closest friends, James's strong point was not team-

work. He was more inclined by nature to take the initiative. While John was also a man of fine feeling, it expressed itself in his case rather in deep emotion and in spiritual susceptibility. In James, it flamed out in action, making him take risks that others would hesitate to face, and impelling him to stand alone rather than wait for reinforcements if attacked by his opponents. He was the kind of man who might have cried with the redoubtable Henry at Agincourt:

"Once more, into the breach, dear friends, once more . . .
In peace, there's nothing so becomes a man
As modest stillness and humility:
But when the blast of war blows in our ears,
Then imitate the action of the tiger;
Stiffen the sinews, summon up the blood . . .
I see you stand like greyhounds in the slips,
Straining upon the start. The game's afoot:
Follow your spirit."

But if those with him had been craven-hearted, or thought the sacrifice unavailing, he would have taken his place alone and died heroically. He was like Horatius, hearing the news that Lars Porsena was about to attack the city:

"Then out spake brave Horatius,
The Captain of the Gate:
'To every man upon this earth
Death cometh soon or late.
And how can man die better
Than facing fearful odds,
For the ashes of his fathers,
And the temples of his Gods?'

. . . . . .

> " 'In yon strait path a thousand
> May well be stopped by three,
> Now who will stand on either hand
> And keep the bridge with me?' "

Horatius inspired two others with his own valour and fearlessness, but would he have attempted to hold the bridge alone? James would have done so, though he might know full well that the attempt would prove futile. He was of that stamp: intrepid in the highest degree. It will therefore be seen that such an element in the company of the Twelve must prove of the first importance when the fires of hate and the might of opposition were later to be faced. Was this why Jesus chose him? Was this one reason why he was admitted to the inner circle?

James Was Jealous of His Master's Safety

The well-known instances of Christ having the three with Him throw some further light on the character of James. The first was when Jairus sent his request that the Master would come to his house and bring back the sunny smile of his stricken child. The Master responded at once, taking with Him Peter, James, and John. He knew why He wanted them with Him. Probably it was that they might be witnesses of His power to give life to the dead, and to make any question as to His methods superfluous. But did the three disciples know why He wanted them? Did James know? There was a reason, but it does not follow that James understood why they had been specially selected to accompany Christ. He may have scented some trap

in the request itself. Jairus was a ruler of the Synagogue, and was doubtless a man of unsullied honour, but had not John told his brother how the rulers had already challenged the authority of the Baptist? And had not there been some evidence already that Jesus was not being well received by the leaders of religion? With the suspicion that the seafarer often cherishes regarding the city dweller, James was probably not very sure about this appeal, and when Jesus asked three whom He knew He could trust to accompany Him into the house, James's suspicions were confirmed. Perhaps even the Master did not feel quite sure about matters? And though it would create hostility for twelve to insist on going in, no one could reasonably object to three. James looked at the burly figure of Peter, and the lithe form of John with confidence. If things came to the worst, these could be relied on to give a good account of themselves.

James, the intrepid, still only dimly comprehending his Lord, may have had similar feelings when he found the three separated again for that ascent of the Mount. He did not care much for Christ's suggestion of going up to these unfrequented heights. On the sea he was at home, and he scarcely knew what fear was, even when the lake was swept by its occasional storms, but with the superstition of the sailor, he looked on the hills as places where spirits made their abode. Anything might happen up there, far from the dwellings of men, but again he felt reassured by the fact that there were three who loved the Master with daily increasing affection, and nothing should befall Him if they could help it.

When that later instance occurred, and Christ asked them to go with Him apart to the secluded spot in the Garden, in James's mind there could be no doubt regarding the request. There had been talk of black treachery in the company of the Apostles. He knew now that the Jews would stoop to anything and stop at nothing to slay the Christ, but it was unbelievable that one of the Twelve would play the part of traitor. Yet had not Christ said it Himself: "One of you shall betray Me"? They had been in doubt for the moment whom Jesus meant and James felt it keenly. It could not be his own brother! And Peter was surely above suspicion! Then to his dismay, as well as to his profound astonishment, the word had been whispered from one to another, and the name of Judas showed who was capable of that black-hearted deed. It is true that the Master had appeared to accept this as inevitable, and seemed reconciled to His death. In fact, He had spoken of it before, though the disciples had not quite understood Him, but this was not to say that they would allow Him to be taken from them without an effort, and James felt that come what might, the three would do their utmost to preserve One whom they now felt to be dear as life itself. He was jealous for the safety of his Lord. And yet, to his shame afterwards he had to confess that he had been overcome by the heavy-scented air of the spring night, and it was only when it was too late, when that foul fellow had kissed the Master, and He was taken off under their very eyes, that James realised the extent of their faithlessness in that hour of vigil.

We may see still further confirmation of our opinion of him when we recall that

JAMES WAS JEALOUS OF HIS MASTER'S HONOUR.

That day when the Apostles had been so sorely disappointed by the Samaritans was never forgotten by James. They had been trudging all day along the rutty tracks that did service for roads in those parts. The sun had been beating on their heads, and the dust had filled eyes and nostrils as they walked. True, some of the band did not feel it as much as others, but those who had been accustomed to the open sea, with its cooling breezes and the comparative ease of travel, were weary of it all. We can imagine that, with the exception of Jesus Himself, they were all far from amiable. But at last, they came to the village to which they had been looking with longing eyes. Jesus was not unknown in Samaria, and there was little doubt that they would here be able to obtain food and rest for the night. Such people, in spite of any prejudice they might have cherished against the Jews, would be only too glad to show honour to One whose fame had travelled far. To their intense disappointment, the request for hospitality was not only refused in churlish fashion, but it was evident from the scowling faces before them, that the Apostles could not hope that any argument they might offer would meet with success. They were footsore. They were hungry. They were angry not so much that they had to turn their faces again to the road, but that such an affront should have

been shown to the Master. James felt it more keenly, possibly, than John, and we can easily understand his kindling his brother's indignation and securing his support in the protest he made to Christ, "Lord, wilt Thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them?"

At first sight, this reveals an unpleasant trait in James, and yet we admire his fine sense of what was fitting to his Master. It was not so much that he was weary of the journey and therefore out of humour with everything. It was rather that he felt such ungenerous conduct towards One who had never spared Himself in the service of men ought to be punished, and before we condemn James ought we not first to ask which is the better thing: to be thus jealous of Christ's honour, or to concern ourselves so little about it that we scarcely notice the studied discourtesy with which He is treated by the modern world? It were a mistake to suppose that Christ could sanction the suggestion made by His passionate followers, but it would be a great thing if to-day there were more of us as willing to see that He were given the place which is His by right.

Unfortunately, this trait in James's character, making him jealous of Christ's honour, sometimes made him err in another direction.

James Was Jealous of His Own Honour

The Apostles had been in Cæsarea Philippi when Jesus had questioned them about the opinion people were expressing about His work. The Master had then addressed the query to them, and Peter with

fine conviction which awakens our admiration, had exclaimed, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Yet incredible though it might seem, out of that incident probably sprang further cause of heart-burning among the Apostles. One imagines that James, while he agreed entirely with what Peter said, and may possibly have admitted that Peter had not only expressed what they were all thinking, but had also done so better than any of the others could, was aggrieved. What right had Peter to speak for the whole company? It was not the first time he had assumed the premier place, and James disliked his presumption. If any one had the right, surely Andrew who had introduced Peter to the Lord ought to have had it. Or what of John? He too had been a disciple of the Baptist and had been with Christ in His lodging before ever Peter had spoken to Him. James was not going to stand by and see quieter men brushed aside by the blustering, outspoken Peter, and as we have often found to our own sorrow, pondering over a slight, fancied or real, does not make for either peace of mind or a feeling of forgiveness. Possibly James did not sleep that night, worrying over his wrongs, and at the first opportunity, he talked over the matter with John.

The Crisis Stirred Ambitions

Peter had no claim to such a position. Others came before him, and if he were counting on the fact that he had made sacrifices for Christ's sake, was he the only one? James and John had given up their boats just as he had, and what is more,

as the records indicate, they gave up their parents and their home, to say nothing of a more flourishing business. Besides, they had connections which Peter could not boast. They not only had friends in the house of the High Priest, but their mother was also Mary's sister and so they were cousins of Christ. Their mother? This gave them an idea. They would see what she thought of the matter. The consequence was that Salome came with that ambitious request that not only made the two very unpopular with their brethren, but has also made them less worthy of our esteem. They wanted the crown, but Christ pointed out that before the crown comes the cross. Socially and financially they might eclipse Peter, but that was not the way in which pre-eminence was accorded in the Kingdom. "Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptised with the baptism that I am baptised with? They say unto Him, We are able."

This is just the answer we might have expected from James. It was as Emerson has said:

> "So nigh is grandeur to our dust,
> So near is God to man,
> When duty whispers low, Thou must!
> The youth replies, I can."

It was no empty boast, as subsequent events proved, and the intrepid James showed his mettle before many years had passed. But it is disquieting to find such ambitions among the chosen Twelve, and especially in the inner circle of the company. Why had Christ called such men? The answer lies here: the

Master had selected them not for what they were, but rather for what they might yet become.

Uncontrolled and undisciplined they cut a sorry figure when they made this presumptuous request, for they revealed the very qualities of self-seeking which they had condemned in Peter. Yet in the fact that they were so aspiring is surely material for the Master to work upon. They were like unbroken colts, full of spirit and energy, and yet full too of possibilities. They desired much for themselves, but the fact that they sought sovereignty rather than servitude was to their credit. Christ can do much with the soul that is dissatisfied with its status and itself, and when aspirations urge it onward, there is the chance of diverting them into worthy channels. It is the lukewarm, the self-satisfied, the apathetic who present the greatest obstacles in the way of development. Dr. Kelman puts it, "The Christian feels the stirring of a new creature in his heart. . . . We are daily being created—as yet we are but in the making."

Things in the making rarely appear beautiful, though the process may be interesting enough. That soft spongy mass of shapeless clay on the wheel does not look alluring to the eye, nor does it present much in the way of possibility to the uninitiated. But when once the wheel has been set revolving, and the hand of the potter is brought into play, then we see a wonderful change taking place. The shapeless takes on form and symmetry, and by and by, after the work of the wheel is complete, and when the fire has finished its share in the undertaking, there may emerge a vessel fit for the board of a king. It is only the soul of the artist

within the potter which can see what the clay can become. A piece of steel in process of forging may be hard and unyielding, but when the craftsman has finished with it, when it has been heated and chilled again and again, it may yet be a Toledo blade, strong, supple, and sharp.

So we see the soul of James in process of shaping. It is a long and laborious task, demanding faith and patience that only Christ possesses, but when He has finished what He commenced, it will be with satisfaction and pride that we shall behold what grace can accomplish.

Unbridled ambition is a snare against which we cannot be too careful. Sovereignty comes only by subduing. The cross is the way to the amaranthine crown. Belshazzar was ambitious to take his father's sceptre, and must many a time have secretly hoped that in one of Nebuchadnezzar's military exploits, the king would meet his match. That is the reason why, when eventually the old monarch died, the young ruler made such havoc of his chances. His riotous and wanton display was suddenly cut short by the writing on the wall, and because he had not first learned to rule himself, his sovereignty was snatched from him. Alexander might prove invincible against the massed forces of his foes but he went down before his own foolish enslavement by the wine cup. And Napoleon, who could declare that even the barrier of the Alps should be as though it were not, who sent his battalions thundering on their way with irresistible tread, at last fell victim to his own unquenchable desire to accomplish the impossible. It is thus with many a man who seeks great things only for him-

self, and has not first learned that God must have prior claim on all he can do. Having learned that lesson, there is the chance of real greatness. It was thus that James came to the crown though he found the means of reaching it very difficult.

The days that followed Salome's interview with the Master were trying. It may be further evidence of James's independence and fearlessness that the request had not been made in private, for we read that "when the ten heard it, they were moved with indignation against the two brethren." The plan had miscarried, but that did not make either James or John very popular, and if human nature be the same all the world over, we can form a good idea of the coldness with which they would be treated by the others. Jesus must have noticed it, for one of those sublime explanations that serve to remove misconception, and to put a man on the right path in pursuit of his legitimate ambitions, was given to them. After showing how princes seek to exercise dominion, our Lord said, "But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister." The counsel was not wasted. James began to see that Peter's presumption was not one whit worse than his own, and that if he were to be worthy of the Master who, without the biting reproof his conduct had merited, had so fully believed in him, he must pay heed to that word. James began to realise that subjection to Christ was the secret of true sovereignty. If he would be master, then he must first be mastered. In that there is again a remarkable resemblance between him and Henry V to whom we have already referred. When Henry

was only a youth, he caused great anxiety to his father because of his wild ways and his riotous companions. Remonstrance failed entirely to move him from his evil course, and prohibitions were equally ineffective. But when his father died, Henry was filled with remorse. He shut himself away from his friends, and in deep contrition resolved that he would strive to be worthy of his father's example and would henceforth seek the noblest paths. After his death he was buried in Westminster Abbey, and the old chronicles give him this title to true nobility, "Hostium victor et sui,"—Conqueror of his enemies and of himself.

If James had made enemies among the Twelve, he set about overcoming them by first conquering his own baser desires and turning his back upon that self-aggrandisement that had brought him so low in his own esteem as well as theirs. John Henry Newman writes truly: "It is strange to say but it is a truth which our own observation and experience will confirm, that where a man discerns in himself most sin, and humbles himself most; when his comeliness seems to vanish away and all his graces to wither; when he feels disgust at himself, and revolts at the thoughts of himself—seems to himself all dust and ashes, all foulness and odiousness; it is then that he is really rising in the kingdom of God." The change was gradual. James had fallen far below his privileges, and though the gracious Master did not allow the incident to make any difference in His attitude to the pair, James, at any rate, could not put it from him. He was determined to win back the self-esteem he had forfeited by his own folly. It is, however,

one thing to descend, and another to climb. The days that followed the crucifixion reveal a chastened and subdued disciple, without any of the dash and daring he had manifested earlier in his career. He had not played a valiant part in the Garden, as we saw. Possibly, his saddening experience was the explanation of that lack of the old intrepid spirit. He did not distinguish himself even after he knew his Lord had risen from the grave. He joined the other six who went back to the fishing at Peter's suggestion. But after the brief hour in which Christ renewed His hold on their troubled hearts, James began to take courage. To quote Newman again, "The way to mount up is to go down. . . . Do you desire to be great? Make yourself little. There is a mysterious connection between real advancement and self-abasement. The more we abase ourselves, the more like we are to our Lord Himself, and the more like to Him, the greater must be our power with Him."

The Cross Subdued and Yet Stimulated the Soul

James is found with the Eleven as they reassembled in the Upper Room. The counsel would probably be one of discretion as the better part of valour, but we can well believe that a newer and better James had emerged. There was little to choose between any of the company at the Cross, but now James would show his worth to the whole band. Courage seemed to blaze the brighter now that the skies were dark, and while they must perforce wait, as their Lord had commanded them,

till the Spirit came, this ardent soul chafed against inactivity, and longed for an opportunity to prove his genuine desire to do something for his Master. A new member of the company was added to make up for the defection of Judas, but still there was nothing James could do. Nothing? In those days of quiet meditation and prayer, new resolves were shaping themselves in many a heart. It was like the vigil of the Middle Ages in which a young noble had to spend the whole night in silent prayer before the altar of God ere he was girded with the sword of full knighthood, and where his ideals were clearly defined, and his resolves had time to crystallise.

When the day of Pentecost came, though there is no express mention of the part James played, we may be sure that he was one of the first to suggest that they should obey the Divine impulse, and declare fearlessly what Christ had done for them. Peter was the admitted spokesman, but who more likely than James, after his experience of Christ's restoring grace, to suggest that Peter should take this position? For while James had once proved himself a Son of Thunder, he was now striving to be a Son of the Highest. He was completely changed. Like a mountain torrent that foams and leaps among the boulders, making the pebbles of its shallow bed chatter with fear at its impetuous haste, yet becoming steadier and stronger as it deepens in the valley, till, before it reaches the sea, it takes the ocean-going vessel on its bosom, the river of James's devotion had become a greater and nobler thing. He was still the fearless one, but it was the calm courage of one who knew that

he must not boast himself of his daring, nor presume on his own unaided efforts lest he fall into sin. He is master of himself, because Christ has now mastered his soul.

The records are silent regarding him until he reappears for in instant in Acts 12. Herod Agrippa, the grandson of Herod the Great, had assumed power in Palestine, and with the twofold object of increasing his popularity with the Jewish leaders and making his position secure, he instituted a persecution of the Christian church. The highest structures attract the lightning, and it is a striking testimony to the place James filled that it was he and not Peter who was first arrested as the ringleader of the Nazarenes. He was led out for execution, and Eusebius has preserved a tradition that the man who denounced James was so greatly impressed by his Christian courage and restraint, that, filled with remorse, he begged for baptism, and was admitted to the fellowship of the believers. He also was condemned to die at the same time as the Apostle. On the way he implored James to pardon the wrong he had done, and without hesitation James kissed his cheek, saying "Pax vobis"—Peace be unto thee!

Surely James thus proved himself worthy of a place in the chosen company and of ranking with those called to the inner circle. He had sought the throne without treading the way of thorns, but Christ had shown him life's noblest example, and revealing the path to power, his higher nature thawed into glorious freedom under the genial rays of the Divine love, showed this intrepid soul to be an invaluable asset to the Apostolic company and

to the whole Christian Church. He had discovered as Henry Drummond so beautifully says: "Heaven lies within, in kindness, in humbleness, in unselfishness, in faith, in love, in service. To get these in, get Christ in." When he sought his own advancement, there was retrogression. When he came to seek the glory of his Lord, we see steady progress along the path of right, and up the steep ascent that leads to the heights.

We cannot look at this strong, virile soul without feeling impelled to emulate his example. His manifest imperfections, far from rendering him an unsafe guide in our quest of the life which is life indeed, may, on the one hand, prove of inestimable service to us, showing plainly the difference between the natural and the spiritual, the false and the true; and on the other hand, they are full of encouragement to the aspiring soul. It is of inestimable comfort to those who have long striven to serve Christ, and who are conscious of their limitations and lack of likeness to Him, to see one who, though imperfect, did not exhaust the Divine patience. Christ called James with all his unlovable traits and his unlovely moods, not because of them, but because there was something of worth in that unshaped soul that Christ saw to be of value to Him and to the world. He calls us in the same way and for the same high ends. It is not blameworthy to be conscious of unworthiness; it is blameworthy in the highest degree to be content with ourselves as we are, and to be without ambition to be better. It is not our fault if, comparing ourselves with the perfect life of our Lord we find ourselves to be far beneath the plane on which we ought to live; but it

is our fault if, knowing that, we do not strive to be other than we are.

Salvation is co-operation with Christ. He cannot save us in spite of ourselves, any more than we can reach perfection without His gracious assistance. But when the soul sees itself, as James saw himself, to be capable of better things than merely grovelling amid the dust of earthly pursuits, and is willing to choose the higher, Christ can have His way with us. When we hear the call, as James heard it, that is the commencement of the course that leads not to the supremacy that comes through self-seeking, but to that power born of seeking first the kingdom of God. Longfellow sings:

"From all vain pomps and shows,
From the pride that overflows,
And the false conceits of men,
From all the narrow rules,
And subtleties of schools,
Poor sad Humanity
Through all the dust and heat
Turns back with bleeding feet
By the weary road it came,
And finds the simple thought
By the Great Master taught,
And that remaineth still:
Not he that repeateth the Name,
But he that doeth the will."

The call of Christ comes in different ways. He meets us in different places, but over and over again the Master has come to the place of common service, and there has found some of His most faithful followers. The daily round is well-fitted to bring out

those natural qualities that help to make character sublime, and the comparatively insignificant tasks that James had been called upon to discharge were preparing him for the larger work Christ had for him to do. And yet, although our sphere may be different from his, the same thing is true of us. We have been set in the midst of life, where many valuable lessons have to be learned and where fine work can be done, but all the gifts we possess as the result of natural endowment, all the development of them that has taken place prior to the call, are meant to be but preparatory to the work of discipleship that Christ has for us to do. He made these fishers into fishers of men. Precisely! And that is just what occurs in the experience of every true, responsive soul. Christ takes us where He finds us, doing what duty demands, but it is that He may pour into the commonplace, the sublimity of the new significance with which He invests life. The place can never be the same once Christ has visited it. Life can never be the same after He has touched it into new beauty. And though we may not be permitted to leave that task, which seems meaningless and unheroic, He enables us to bear witness to the truth by the tenor and spirit of our life.

This also needs to be said: by the call to discipleship, Christ not only calls us to His service, but He also summons the latent powers of heart and mind to enrich all we do for His sake. He nerves the soul for high endeavour. He enables it to face life with courage that is high, and yet humble, and though its achievements may be unrecorded and its intrepid following of the right may remain untrumpeted even as was that of James, such a life

cannot be in vain. Faith will bear its unwavering witness to the truth that makes men free, free from the service of self and from fear of what life may bring. It will stand as a landmark, in the daytime, like the great Statue of Liberty which, with uplifted arm, rises high above the swirling waters at the entrance of New York harbour, immovable through winter storms as in the placid days of summer, and when darkness falls, the bright beam of its witnessing light shall blaze like a beacon in the gloom, illumining the waters where other souls sail towards the haven. James, the intrepid! In an age like this, he has a message for the fearful in heart, for the craven in witness, for the faltering in faith. Be strong!

IV

PETER, THE IMPETUOUS

"Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone."

—John 1:42.

"WE are always doing each other injustice," says George Eliot, "and thinking better or worse of each other than we deserve, because we only see and hear separate words and actions. We don't see each other's whole nature." That is peculiarly applicable to our judgment on Peter. Ask the average man what he thinks of Peter, and the chances are that his reply will be rather uncomplimentary than otherwise to the great Apostle. It will be probably to the effect that Peter was an arrogant, self-important, aggressive individual, intent on thrusting himself forward, seeking the first place and the last word on every possible occasion, and that, in the end, in spite of his loud protestations of loyalty and courage, he played the part of the coward, not only fleeing before the foes of Christ like the rest, but adding denial to his desertion. Others may say that next to Judas who sold the Lord for a handful of silver, Peter takes lowest place. He was, in a word, Peter the impetuous! That opinion warrants us in saying again that George Eliot is right in pointing to the fact that we base our criticisms or our compliments on the unstable foundation

of "separate words and actions." But though we may allow the opinion of the outsider to find expression, that does not say that we must take it at more than its face value, for we are confronted with this fact: Christ chose this imperfect man for a place in the inner circle of the Apostles, and what is more, He gave him some privileges the others did not enjoy. We must therefore look deeper for the true measure of Peter's character, and as we trace its development stage by stage, we can be profoundly thankful that Divine grace can transform the soul from what is repellent to that which is alluring.

Peter Was a Man of Parts

There is something about him that, in spite of objectionable traits in his character, exerts a subtle fascination for most of us. Peter was a man so like the real human beings we know ourselves to be, that his very humanness is one of his chief attractions. We have no information about his early life, but we can well believe that he caused his unnamed mother many an anxious hour by reason of his adventurous escapades. She would watch the boy swarm up the mast of the fishing boat on the lake, terrified lest he should fall, and then call vainly to him as he leapt into the water and swam far beyond his depth. She would listen with concern as the dour old rabbi urged her to exercise more control over this fiery, young soul, pointing out the bad example he was setting not only to Andrew, his younger brother, but also to the other boys of the town. And yet, when the father came home, boiling with anger at the story some of the neighbours had told about the wild

pranks of his son, and resolved to enforce the moral of that story with due emphasis, the mother would intercede, proving as only a mother can, that all this wildness was but due to the exuberance of youth which would one day be turned to account, and also reminding Jona, as only a wife dare, that perhaps he had not been altogether a pattern of gentleness in his own youth. So the father had to be content with the Aramaic equivalent of "Boys will be boys," and offered the youthful Simon some reproof, not unmixed with secret pride in his daring. Those days passed swiftly enough, and the two brothers who were so vastly different from one another, joined forces as fishermen on the Sea of Galilee. The father could not do much to give them a start, but they managed to get one boat of which there is little doubt Peter would be in command. They afterwards came to a working arrangement with the sons of Zebedee, possibly using the same landing place and stores, and trawling their nets between the two boats. So we link up those early days with the coming of the Baptist.

Simon had doubtless questioned his brother about this strange preacher, and he was sufficiently interested to chaff Andrew about the sudden turn he had taken towards serious things. They did not appeal to Simon to any great extent, although he was naturally conversant with the hopes of the Hebrew people that eventually Jehovah would keep His word, and raise up a successor for the throne of David. But then, Simon was only just building up the business on the lake, and he had what appeared to him far more important things to think about than the fulfilment of prophecies. However, when

Andrew seemed becoming more interested in religion than in his share of the work, Simon's banter turned to bitterness. It was all very well up to a point, but business was business, and even the Scriptures enjoined, to Peter's immense satisfaction, that a man should not be righteous overmuch. Both brothers had argued the matter with considerable heat but without much success. Andrew had striven to convince Simon that this prophet was indeed preparing the way for the Messiah, but Simon was equally certain that Andrew was preparing the way for bankruptcy for them both, and unless he were willing to give more attention to the boat, then he would have to seek another partner.

Things had come to a deadlock. When the brothers were out with the nets, Simon was by turns sullen and spiteful. He would go for an hour without speaking a word, and then like the thunderstorm that suddenly bursts through a scowling sky, he would give vent to bitter recriminations. But one evening the whole situation changed. Simon was there in the boat, waiting for Andrew to come back, for he had promised to return in time for the night's work. But he was late, and Simon was weary of the way in which things were going. If Andrew did not come, then he had made up his mind that he was not going to lose any more trips through his unreliability and he had better . . . The sound of hasty footfalls on the beach made Simon look up. Ah, here was Andrew, late again, and most likely full of excuses, but now he would have to hear the truth. If he thought this kind of thing could go on indefinitely, while their weekly catch was steadily diminishing, he was mistaken. "Simon!" Andrew's voice

trembled with excitement. Peter slowly straightened his back as he turned towards his brother. There was a look in Andrew's face that kept back the studied reproof Simon had reserved for his coming. "Simon!" gasped the other breathlessly. "We have found the Messiah. You laughed at me before; you would not believe that John was right." "And I am not sure that I believe now. Where is He? I want to see Him for myself . . ." replied the cynical Simon.

There was no question about the welcome they would receive, for Andrew had been reassured on that point by the attitude of Jesus to himself, but was it wise to bring the critical Simon face to face with the new Teacher? Yet it was worth risking much to convince Simon of His identity, and so the introduction was made. At once Jesus turned His penetrating gaze on Simon. It seemed as if those pure eyes were reading the unbelief written on the secret pages of the soul. That was not all they saw. On the contrary, Christ saw possible greatness in this man of parts. He gave the seeker a new name which was henceforth to be significant of what the Saviour saw: "Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone."

What were Simon's feelings? This was an unflattering designation. It was hardly the reception he had looked for from the Messiah, if this were really He. Did the Teacher imply that he was hard and unyielding as stone? But Peter knew himself to be more often so impulsive that stability was one of the last things to which he could lay claim. Or did Jesus mean that locked up in that rugged exterior

there were innate greatness and beauty that might be liberated to adorn life and character? The truth is that our Lord regarded this fisherman as the sculptor of genius looks at a block of rough-hewn marble just torn from the quarry. The undiscerning would see only a piece of stone, discoloured by weather-stains or marked by the chisels that had squared it before it was set up in the studio. But to the eyes of genius, there were other things to gladden the heart and awaken desire. Locked up in the marble was an angel, ready with liberated wing to speed on its messages of mercy, or some great heroic figure that would inspire men by the splendid poise of the head, the eagerness and desire in the face. Only to the sculptor were these apparent, and only to the penetrating eyes of Divine purpose were the latent possibilities manifest. If, as has been said:

> "Love is observation, patience, vigilance,
> And heartfelt understanding,
> Love is wisdom in tender operation,"

then here is plain proof of the love that burned in the heart of Christ for all men, and of the discernment that made Him choose Simon Peter not for what he was but for what he might one day be when the mallet and chisel had done their work of liberation.

The unlovely traits of Peter's character were repulsive to Christ, but it goes without saying that in that unhewn personality, our Lord saw the indications of great, unselfish service. That very impetuosity that had brought him at once from the boat, and which early gave proof of its power, might be

so developed and disciplined that it would be of the first importance in coming days. This man who did not trust any one but himself, might, when once he had been taught his own limitations and the greatness of life's opportunities, become a leader of men. This man, so hot-blooded and impetuous, so self-confident and courageous, might yet be, when cleansed and consecrated, a valiant witness to the truth.

Details of the days which followed are difficult to arrange. Those who had now been brought into personal relationship with Jesus doubtless accompanied Him on some of His brief visits to neighbouring towns, and also went with Him to Jerusalem for the Passover. It was only subsequently that they were called to the complete abandonment of their secular toil. One day, Jesus came down to the lake, and found Simon and Andrew busy with the nets. His call had nothing of the piercing blast of the clarion, yet it moved them to the depths of their souls. They did not question His meaning: it was plain. "Fishers of men" could mean only one thing to those who had spent even that short time in His company. "Straightway they forsook their nets, and followed Him." The incident had not passed unnoticed, though its meaning could hardly have been taken in by the other two brothers, James and John. But when they saw Jesus coming along the shore, accompanied by Peter and Andrew, the discarded nets drifting away with the current, they knew that something unusual was afoot. The call was repeated, and the sons of Zebedee followed suit with instant obedience. With deeper meaning than the poet gave to the lines, we may say of these four men:

"Theirs not to reason why,
Theirs not to make reply,
Theirs but to do or die."

The "do or die" spirit was certainly that of Peter, and that is why we find him a character so baffling and yet so perennially interesting. But if it be true, as Bishop Mandell Creighton says, "A man's character is more revealed by what he tries to do, than by what he succeeds in doing," then Peter is worthy of knowing better. This man of varying moods, of restless energy, and headstrong nature, was a man of parts, and the wild pranks of his youth which issued into the fearless and adventurous fisherman, gave promise of great things when once Christ had conquered him for the main purpose of life.

He is not an isolated instance. Many a boy who thoughtlessly caused much anxiety to his parents by his hair-breadth escapes and almost uncontrollable spirits, has proved afterwards that these qualities were as the rough stone, waiting only for the master-hand to hew them into fine manhood. Ian Maclaren with deft craftsmanship tells the story of Speug and Duncan Robertson in the village school. We do not wonder that they are described as "Young Barbarians," for they are a terror to all law-abiding citizens, and the despair of their Dominie. But he goes on to relate how Dunc showed his valour at Tel-el-Kebir, dying in the service of his country, while that same graceless Speug, having appeared at intervals from Australia, Texas, the Plate and the Cape, always straightforward, masterful, open-handed, and gallant, found himself at last holding a narrow pass with a handful of troopers against the fierce Mata-

bele, and having sent a settler's family back to safety, fought to the last man and his own last cartridge, with his back against a rock—fitting symbol of the man himself. With a man who is timorous and mistrustful of his God-given powers, Christ can do little at first. With a man like Peter, confident and courageous, ready to make a dash in order to achieve the difficult, Christ can do much. But with the man who has been cleansed from cowardice as well as from over-confidence, who has been brought through the refining fires, and who is consecrated to the Divine service, Christ can do most. That is why He had faith in Peter: He looked not at the present but at future possibilities of valiant service for the Kingdom of God.

Peter Was a Man in the Making

The days of discipleship were full of opportunities. They were full too of bewildering experiences. Peter was often perplexed by the ways of the Master, for to his practical mind, it appeared that Jesus was not always as careful to make the best of His chances of securing popular support as He might be. He ventured to remonstrate with the Master on more than one occasion, but he was always met with the same baffling patience and wonderful forbearance. It was difficult to understand how One who could call the dead to life, who gave sight to the blind, and could cleanse the leper at a word, was willing to wander from place to place sometimes with insufficient food, and with no roof over His head except the indigo dome of the midnight sky. Nor did He seem to welcome the attentions of those

who would do Him honour. Peter remembered how, after that marvellous cure in his own home that night at Capernaum, and the healing of multitudes of sick folk, Christ had disappeared for prayer to a secluded spot, and only with the greatest difficulty had Peter discovered where He was. When Peter told the Master what a profound impression had been made, so that all men were seeking for Him, what was His reply? "Let us go elsewhere into the next towns, that I may preach there also."

That was scarcely the way to gain adherents for the new Kingdom. And how long was the Master to live in this manifestly unfitting fashion? A king's son who was soon to mount the vacant throne of his fathers would have taken steps to make his position secure by revealing something of his dignity, by producing his credentials, and by assuring the people whose support he desired that, while he was disguised for a time till he had gained the hearts of his subjects, thus avoiding the vigilance of his foes, soon they would see him arrayed as became a monarch. There was nothing of this about the Messiah-King, and it was puzzling. What was the consequence? Peter had foreseen it. He had tried to warn Jesus that His course was doomed to failure unless He openly showed Himself to be the Messianic Monarch. And the day came. Victory was within the Lord's reach and He let it go! The multitudes impressed with His power to work miracles came to make Him king by force, and He . . .? "He departed again into a mountain Himself alone." Peter was perplexed. He had never seen anything like this, yet he did not doubt for a moment that this was veritably the Christ. He had

seen not only Christ's power to work wondrous cures, but there was also that night when it seemed as though all the demons of the deep were intent on compassing His ruin. Yet, when the storm was at its height and the boat awash almost to the thwarts, He rose up at the cry of alarm from His friends, and rebuked the fury of the winds and waves. At once they were stilled as a fretful child when the mother's embrace hushes its fears.

Peter had felt a strange sublimity investing the Master's words and deeds, and there were deeps sounded in his soul of which before he had been unconscious. For example, Jesus had spoken about forgiveness, and Peter felt self-condemned. Samuel Johnson wrote: "Life is short. Let us not throw any of it away in useless resentment. It is best not to be angry. It is next best to be quickly reconciled." He had been cherishing a grudge against one of his friends, and he is impelled to ask, "Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Till seven times?" Jesus saith, "I say not until seven times: but until seventy times seven." That was only one of the many occasions when he had realised the immense difference between the plane on which he and his fellow-disciples lived, and the altitude of their Lord's life.

Still it could not be expected that others would understand the Saviour even as the disciples did, and so, Peter was almost prepared for what eventually happened. It seemed inevitable. The Master had incurred the displeasure of the people because He challenged their sincerity: they were following Him, not for what He desired to teach them, but rather to see Him do some extraordinary thing—multiplying

the loaves, and thus providing for their hunger in the desert. He had told them the significance of that bread, pointing as it did to the Bread which came down from heaven, and Jewish prejudice and materialism had been too much for the crowd. "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? . . . How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" The hard saying could have but one result with such critical and coarse-minded people. They simply abandoned Him as One whom it was impossible to follow or believe. The clouds were gathering. Capernaum had cast Him out even as Nazareth had done before. Was He able to count on the loyal support of the Twelve? He turned to them, giving them the opportunity of going the way of the multitude if they so desired. "Will ye also go away?" The question was like a searchlight sweeping the skies and bringing into high relief things that had been shrouded in the sable wrappings of night. And Peter saw in that dazzling beam what before had been hidden from him. This condescending Christ, seeking their voluntary allegiance, giving the faint-hearted the chance of falling away, was verily a monarch of men. "Lord," he cried, and there is passion in his tones, "to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

It was more than a great utterance. It was the proof that Christ's personality had been making a daily deepening impress on the soul of His impetuous disciple. Christ might have His own reasons for veiling His glory, but there was no doubt now in Peter's mind as to the power He possessed and the place He would eventually fill. Carlyle says: "Have

a purpose in life, and having it, throw into your work such strength of mind and muscle as God has given you." Peter had such a purpose. There was a deeper note, and a more earnest effort to understand Jesus from that time, and though he was still impulsive, and frequently did the right thing in the wrong way, causing some jealousy among the rest, there was still a measure of progress. That momentous occasion at Cæsarea Philippi when Christ questioned His friends about the people's verdict regarding Him, marked another epoch in Peter's life. Jesus asked, "Whom say ye that I am?" and without hesitation, Peter declared the faith that was in him and in his brethren. "Thou are the Christ, the Son of the living God." (Matt. 16:13.) It is evident that this outspoken confession gave gratification to the Master's heart. So much depended upon a clear grasp of the essential fact that He was indeed, despite all appearances to the contrary, the Messianic King, and it indicates Peter's growth in grace that, when this truth was revealed to him, he was able not only to comprehend it, but to express it with such assurance. Christ had not laboured in vain. The rough, shapeless stone had been slowly taking shape, and the spiritual was emerging from the grossly material. "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven." Then followed that great word of the Master which has caused endless controversy, and which still divides men as to its correct interpretation. "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church."

There is here a play on words, for though there is

no difference in the Aramaic between the Apostle's name and the rock, in the Greek there is this change. "Thou art Petros, and on this petra I will build My church." What is the significance of the two terms? Petros means a rock in its original bed, while petra describes a piece that has been dislodged. But that helps us only very little. Was Peter himself the foundation stone, or was it his confession regarding the Messianic character of Christ? The Master's words are emblazoned round the dome of St. Peter's basilica in Rome. "Tu es Petrus et super hanc Petram aedificabo Ecclesiam meam." But we are of the opinion that it is not the man, but his declaration on which our Lord placed the emphasis, or why did not Christ say, "Thou art Peter and *on thee* will I build my church?" It is his faith, not himself to which Christ referred. That being so, we can see that although there is no reference to the Atonement nor the Resurrection, on which grounds some hold that it is an inadequate confession, it cannot be denied that the essential fact is plainly grasped. This was indeed the Messiah, and though Peter was possibly unable to comprehend, at that time, all the term implied, it can be seen that herein are gathered up all the promises made to the fathers, and the Suffering Servant of Jehovah described by Isaiah and the Lamb of God described by John the Baptist, find their truest fulfilment in "the Christ, the Son of the living God."

The binding and loosing are interpreted as a reference to things permitted or prohibited. It is rabbinical language, and the authority was afterwards given to the rest of the Apostles, enabling them to give guidance to those who wished to conform to

the requirements of the faith, for example, when the Apostles decided which course was to be adopted regarding Gentile believers in Acts 15 : 23.

It is a singular thing, revealing the fact that Peter was still a man in the making though he had passed far from the rough-hewn stage, that this confession was followed by retrogression painful to behold. Knowing that the Apostles were now ready for fuller light, our Lord intimated to them that He must go up to Jerusalem, which would entail His death at the hands of the elders. He would however rise again at the third day. But here Peter's impetuosity asserted itself once more, and with pitiable presumption he began to remonstrate with Christ about such a course. His motives were doubtless better than his methods, but that did not save him from bitter rebuke. "Get thee behind Me, Satan," follows strangely on the great promise to "the Rock," but it demonstrates that there was still much material to be cut away by the keen chisel of Christ before the character of the Apostle was complete. The Mount of Transfiguration gave to Peter further confirmation that this was the Christ, and in spite of still manifest imperfections, we note a finer figure emerging as the days pass. That scene in the Upper Room, when he meets with a curt refusal our Lord's request to be permitted to wash his feet, and when he hears that this means he has no part with the Saviour, cries passionately, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head," makes us hope for better things. When again we hear his stout protestations of loyalty in view of possible declension on the part of some, we are gratified with his progress. "Although all shall be offended, yet

will not I." But the words were scarcely uttered before our Lord answered, "Verily, I say unto thee, that this day, even in this night, before the cock shall crow twice, thou shalt deny Me thrice." The old impetuousness of the man rose like a flame: "If I must die with Thee, yet will I not deny Thee." The fire died down as quickly as it had arisen. It was not the time for words. The sorrowful face of the Saviour, and the sense of mischief afoot, were sufficiently unnerving. It was with a sigh of relief that Peter found himself out in the sweet night air, walking silently towards the Garden. Perhaps he blamed himself for what had happened. There had been too much of self in that hour of tender parting, and he was, moreover, somewhat shaken by Christ's evident lack of confidence in him. He was consoled by the fact, however, that when the Saviour went apart to pray, He asked the three who had been with Him before on two other important occasions, to share the watch with Him.

Peter found himself living over those hours again. In the ruler's house, he had seen Christ as the Lord of life; on the Mount he had seen the glory of the Son of God; and now, by a strange trick of memory, Andrew's words about the Lamb of God whom the Baptist described came back, blending with the line of the Scriptures—"The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." He was looking on the sacrificial Saviour of the race. To think that they had spent nearly three years with Him, and yet they had only understood a tithe of His teaching! At least Peter would be worthier in the future. But even as the resolution was forming in his mind, he felt his eyes closing, and overcome by the strain of impending

ill, and the warmth of the night, he slept. How long he slumbered, he hardly knew, but he was roused by flaring lights, and by the tones of a loved voice saying, "Sleep on now . . . behold, the Son of Man is betrayed." Peter was alert in a moment. Betrayed? Not if he could help it. The sword leapt from its scabbard as a young man of the High Priest's guard laid hold of the Lord. He dealt him a blow that, but for a skilful stepping aside on the part of Malchus, would have laid him dead, but the calm voice of Christ rang out, "Put up thy sword. . . . The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?" It was just what Peter had deplored many a time. There was no understanding what course the Master would adopt! When His friends wanted to help Him, He refused their aid. If the Master had listened to him before, He might by now have had the whole populace at His feet.

Perplexed and sorrowful, Peter could not leave the matter there, and by means of John's influence, he found himself in the courtyard of the High Priest. At least, he would hear what was going on, and it might be that even yet there might be means of doing something. Impetuous still, he cannot be left to his own thoughts: he must act somehow to prove that Christ was mistaken in supposing that he, the Rock, would not be stable in the storm! Alas, the banter of the soldiery put all those noble thoughts to flight, and after he had been challenged three times, each time rebutting the accusation with growing anger, and letting his temper slip the leash, he came out with a volley of oaths, denying that he ever knew the Galilean. In the tense silence that fell on the group round the fire came the shrill crowing of

the distant cock. The chill dawn was not more desolate than Peter's soul, and as he moved slowly from the fire, hardly realising what had happened, the passing of a party across the courtyard attracted his notice. There was Jesus. He was being taken to stand trial again, but as He looked at Peter's troubled face, there was only tender reproach in those eyes, and Peter's heart broke.

What Peter did in the days that followed no one knows. He was unworthy of such a Master. He had virtually betrayed Him, just as Judas had done. How then could he count himself among the Lord's friends? He was a denier, a deserter, a dastard. The vain attempt to get beyond reach of his accusing conscience led him far from the cruel scenes of Golgotha, but the darkness that overspread the earth as that terrible tragedy was enacted was not more dense than that which filled the soul of Peter. His apostleship was ended. His high-sounding promises of life-long loyalty came back like accusing spectres, pointing the finger of scorn at him. He, the Rock? Nay, Peter felt himself a man of shifting sand—utterly unreliable and base. Yet what were those words he had momentarily forgotten? "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."

Keats has beautifully said:

"There is a budding morrow in midnight,"

and Peter found this in the recollection of Divine aid. He had a duty to his brethren, and was not Christ looking to him to do his part? Even though he had failed miserably, there was no reason why he

should endorse that failure by perpetuating his defection. No! he would strive to live as his Lord wished. But again spectral laughter unnerved him. The disciples would know that he had played a pitiable part that night. They would remember his stout words in disparagement of them, and his proud boast that at least Christ could depend on him! Perhaps had it not been for a chance meeting with John, the course of Peter's life might have been different. They met, possibly under cover of darkness, and after Peter had obtained news of all that had happened, the two decided to join the other nine. Yet with the break of day, came word that the tomb was empty. They both ran there, but John was younger and more fleet of foot, and when Peter reached the tomb, there was John standing outside, afraid to enter. Peter pushed in. It was as the women said. The Lord had gone. Gone where? Again, kind memory which more often ministers healing to the heart than mocking of our strivings and failure, came to his aid. The Master had said something about this very thing: He had specified the third day, and . . . He had risen!

From the depths of despair, Peter's soul soared to the heights, but from the heights he went down again to even lower depths as he realised that he had neither part nor lot with One so tender and faithful. Yet Peter was still in the making. How then could he know fully the extent of the Saviour's compassion? There came the Risen Master to converse with him, receiving in private the story of his shame and sorrow. That interview is mentioned without any details of what occurred, and yet it left the Apostle still undecided as to his future course,

for it was after that he suggested going back to the lake. But there, with the morning light, came a better day. Christ met His friends on the shore, and receiving the threefold affirmation of Peter's love, He gave him not only the thrice repeated commission, but in the presence of the others reinstated him as one of His chosen friends; forgiven, loved, and restored. Peter's love for Christ was the redeeming feature of those saddening days. "Only give me love," says Henry Drummond, "pure, burning love, and loyalty to Him, and I shall climb from law to law, through grace and glory, to the place beside the throne where the angels do His will." And it was love—Christ's love for the Apostle, and the passionate love of the Apostle for Christ—that flung open the door of new life to Peter, the impetuous. As the saintly Tauler has it, "Such a man did never before so heartily and strongly love as now he doth. Yea, and his care is how he may order his life right Christianly, and fashion it anew, and, out of fervent love toward his Lord and Saviour, exercise himself without ceasing in all good work and virtue."

The Making of the Man

is seen in those trying experiences and in what followed Pentecost. Peter took his place again with the ten, and they never questioned his right to the leadership for which he had been peculiarly fitted, and to which he had been called. It is true he had vowed splendidly and fallen shamefully. He sank vilely but rose valiantly. He began boastfully, but ended brilliantly, bringing honour to his Master and blessing both to the early Church and to the whole

Christian family. The days preceding Pentecost revealed a chastened and consecrated Peter. Christ's chisel had brought forth hidden beauties of character and unsuspected qualities of greatness from that block of shapeless stone.

With the coming of the Spirit, behold, the cowardly are courageous. The door shut for fear of the Jews is flung open, and those men, who had been afraid of their own shadow, were now fearless as lions in the cause of Christ. The time was opportune. It was a feast-day, and Jerusalem was crowded with pilgrims from every part. It was these who formed a large part of the audience which Peter addressed, and as he musters his facts, appealing to history and prophecy as well as to the happenings of recent days, we are moved with wonder. Inspired by the Spirit, his very soul takes fire. There is a new-found gift of oratory that owes something to natural endowment, for there is the glint of the sunlit seas in his eyes and the sound of the wind in the rigging. There are gentler notes as when the water lapped sweetly against the sides of his vessel in the old days, for he is too conscious of his own frailty to rail unduly at the unbelief of the uninformed. But when he accuses the leaders of perfidy and unwillingness to see the light, there is the indignation which he felt against his own baser self. Granted that his reference to the patriarch David was masterly, and his appeal to the Scriptures worthy of the skilled advocate, there was something more than Peter's fiery enthusiasm in all this. There was power from on high. The Holy Spirit had taken possession of the surrendered soul, and love, kindling the fire, gave forth its witness to the things

which to him were of supreme importance. "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love," said Paul later, "I am become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal." Peter had found what true love for Christ meant, and out of the fulness of his own experience of forgiving mercy, he pleaded the cause of the Saviour with overwhelming success.

The healing of the impotent man at the Temple Gate gave him further opportunity of revealing the power of the Spirit, and his appearance before the Sanhedrin was remarkable. What they intended to be a speech in defence of himself, Peter turned into one of full and fearless condemnation of them. "Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by Him doth this man stand before you whole." They were thunder-struck by the boldness of Peter and John, and it is a confession of their own impotence that they simply commanded the two not to speak again in that Name. Verily, Peter had changed past belief under the touch of the Risen Redeemer.

In the development and organisation of the Church he filled a glorious place, condemning the falsehood of Ananias, confirming the faith of those in Samaria who had been led into the light through the preaching of the Evangel, and afterwards travelling through many provinces of the Empire seeking fresh conquests for the Cross. The experience at Joppa gave him enlarged views of the call which Christ addressed to all men, and although there was some misunderstanding on the question of the ad-

mission of the Gentiles, in which he and Paul were at variance, eventually those differences were settled. He was arrested when James was martyred under Herod Agrippa, but afterwards released for further service in the cause of Christ. All the impetuousness of his earlier life had been directed into a new and deeper channel. It was now seen in untiring effort to extend the Saviour's sway and in daring devotion to His will. It was almost as though Peter were anticipating Whittier's haunting lines:

> "Heaven's gate is shut to him who comes alone:
> Save thou a soul, and it shall save thine own."

And in his letters there is not only the witness of a man who has grappled with the facts of faith, and has come to strength through struggle, but also a tender solicitude for the world's good that has its source in the compassions of Christ which had kept Peter himself from utter despair.

He the self-seeking, the arrogant and boastful, desiring the premier position on every occasion, had been re-made. Those days with Christ had taught him much, and possibly the hours subsequent to his desertion taught him even more. He realised then that he could not live without the conscious blessing of his Lord, and it was his avowed purpose to enable men to see that in Him was the life indeed. There is a hint in his letters that persecution would test the sincerity and stability of his Christian friends, and Peter was to know for himself the meaning of those words which had seemed so cryptic at the time: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst

whither thou wouldest, but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not." And the once cowardly proved his valour; the denier showed his devotion. Nero had ascended the throne at this time, and his excessive vanity in his poetical powers, by which he hoped not only to equal Homer and Ovid, but to surpass them, is supposed to be the cause for the burning of Rome. Be that as it may, the Christians were blamed for the conflagration, and in order to appease the ruined and desperate populace, it was decreed that a new Rome should rise in place of the old, and that the ruins would be washed out in blood. The Empire was scoured for wild beasts of every kind. A temporary building was erected, and the games in which the victims were the Christians, were commenced. Nothing that vile ingenuity could suggest was left out. Groups of Christian women and men were sewn up in the skins of beasts and flung to the lions. Yet before they met their death, they stood before the imperial box and sang their hymn, "Christus regnat,"—Christ reigns! Others were wrapped in inflammable material and being placed on high poles, were set on fire to illumine the gardens of the Emperor. But they did not flinch at their sufferings, and they kindled a light of valiant witness for the truth that shall never be put out.

Peter was eventually taken, and brought into the presence of Nero. The tradition runs that following a suggestion which Nero found in the writings of Seneca that famous criminals were sometimes crucified head downwards, Peter was executed in that way. Whatever be the truth or otherwise of the

tradition, there is no doubt that Peter was martyred under Nero in A. D. 64, and that he proved his fidelity even to the end. His character came to completion as the work of a sculptor takes on the form which the master-mind saw in the rough stone, and of the man of sand, Christ made a rock-hewn figure which commands admiration not so much by reason of the figure itself, but because of the patience and skill of the Master-hand. The denier had been transformed into the director of the Church's development. The privileged beholder of Christ's majesty had become the upholder of His honour in the face of friend and foe alike. The fiery, impetuous self-seeker had been changed into one of the greatest Christians who ever lived to lavish the love he felt for the Saviour on those who were, like himself, anxious to live for Christ. "Love is not getting, but giving," says Van Dyke. "It is goodness and honour, and peace and pure living. Love is the best thing in the world, and the thing that lives longest."

So from the rough block brought from the quarry to the studio of the sculptor, we have seen Peter passing under the hand of Christ. Great cleaving blows were first necessary in order to remove the unsightly stains and primeval roughness of the material, but when that was done, slowly the shapeless stone began to take form, and with infinite patience, Christ worked on till the soul of the Apostle was seen, fashioned in the likeness of his Lord, and an inspiration to all who looked on it. We may take courage as we remember that though many a blemish may remain in us, the same Master is at work upon the material of our womanhood and manhood. We have but to respond to His hand, to

obey the direction of His Spirit, and though we cannot fill the niche in the temple of Fame occupied by Peter, we can yet realise the will of the Father for each of us, and become examples of His divine grace.

V

PHILIP, THE PRUDENT

"He findeth Philip, and Jesus saith unto him, Follow Me."

—John 1:43.

PRUDENCE has been defined as "the ability of judging what is best in the choice both of ends and means." If that be true, then, though there was considerable diffidence blending with his prudence at the outset, it describes fairly accurately the character of Philip. He was ruled more by the intellect than the emotions, and before committing himself to any definite course, he first weighed the pros and cons with scrupulous care.

He is a man of whom we do not expect to hear much. His gifts were of a quiet order. Only occasionally do we find him taking a prominent part in the events of those epoch-making days, but in each case there is something which helps us to understand better his peculiar temperament. It is like travelling through a tunnel where, at intervals, there are shafts admitting light and air, so that we get momentary glimpses of the sky through the billowing smoke, and every incident, therefore, in which Philip appears must be closely examined if we are to form any estimate of the man and his worth, or trace his development as a disciple. Probably he was the first whom Jesus found without the intervention of any one else. Andrew and John went in search of Christ at

the behest of the Baptist, while both Peter and James owed their acquaintance with Him to others. But Jesus "findeth Philip." This is most suggestive. He desired this unobtrusive, thoughtful man, who would be unlikely to leap to conclusions hastily, and who was too modest to force himself on the notice of the Teacher. We can say this without any disparagement of those whose eagerness brought them such blessing. A man like Philip—prudent, patient and humble-minded—would be an invaluable addition to the ranks of the disciples. His thoughtfulness and circumspection would act as a corrective to the impetuous or the impressionable; he would not be unduly elated by success nor easily daunted by failure. And Christ sought him. The terse yet constraining command fell on his ear, "Follow Me!"

Did he obey immediately? A tradition mentioned by Clement of Alexandria records that Philip was the man who asked the Master's permission to bury his father first before leaving home. That can be neither affirmed nor denied. The Fourth Gospel yields the fact that he apparently did not at once join the group, but went off to consult his friend Nathanael. "Still waters run deep!" It is what we might expect of Philip. True, his soul had been stirred by this sudden call to discipleship. He had never dreamed that such an honour could come his way. Yet he was not blind to its significance. It would mean the abandonment of business and home, for this Preacher had taken that course Himself, and to follow Him implied as much for a disciple. But it would also mean a definite allegiance to His mission, which even then was known to be Messianic in character. Ought he to take such a step? To

what would it commit him? These were questions that exercised his prudent mind as he wended his way to Nathanael's house. But on the other side there was a profound conviction that Jesus was the actual fulfilment of long-cherished hopes, although that, however, seemed too good to be true. Might he not be mistaken? He would submit it to the dispassionate judgment of his friend. After all, he would argue, two heads were better than one. Yet this man who combined both caution and confidence in this strange way, felt sure his impression was a correct one. He would put it to Nathanael as a definite discovery, and see what effect it would have on him.

When at length he came upon his friend, with surprising suddenness for one usually prudent, Philip blurted out the news. "We have found Him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write: Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." Philip scanned the face before him, wondering whether his own opinion would be confirmed or not. Nathanael, slowly laying aside the roll over which he had been poring, looked at Philip, and then in quiet, decisive tones asked the question which stabbed the soul back to reality. "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Alas! hope, which had been soaring with wide-spread wings, crashed to earth. "Nazareth?" The current saying which was later quoted by Christ's critics flashed through Philip's mind, "Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet," and—Nazareth was in Galilee! Then he was mistaken? His mind felt temporary relief that he had been saved in time from a disastrous step; yet a moment after, the dull pain of disappointment was felt. He had been so moved by those

gracious tones, so profoundly impressed by the call to be the companion of One so exalted—and this was the end of everything! Yet it were perhaps unwise to attach too much weight to Nathanael's opinion. Philip had seen Christ; Nathanael had not. Suppose the popular proverb were at fault? There could be no harm in asking his friend to go into the matter more carefully, for it was too important to dismiss in that summary fashion. The clouds lifted from Philip's face, as turning once more to the quiet figure before him, he said pathetically, "Come and see." There were two things Philip had in mind. If Nathanael were convinced that this were the Christ, it would mean not only the sharing of a great discovery, but the lifting of a heavy responsibility—that of making a decisive answer to Christ's compelling cause. If, on the other hand, Nathanael's judgment remained unsatisfied, it would relieve Philip of further anxiety in the matter. His course would be clear. The call would be declined.

This cautious figure lacks the fine qualities that awaken admiration. We much prefer the man who loves the highest when he sees it, and who, with uncalculating heart and noble enthusiasm, flings prudence aside and follows the soul's impulse. But there is still need for a man of Philip's peculiar temperament in the company of Christ's followers, and though while he is still undeveloped and immature, he may weary us with his deliberateness, when those finer qualities are brought out they will prove of undoubted worth. He represents that type which sits down first and counts the cost, and having done so, is prepared to follow Christ whatever it may mean. Such a man is worth untold gold to the cause of the

Kingdom. Philip may have been deliberate, but at last he became a determined disciple of Christ. His choice was the logical outcome of careful consideration of the Master's claims, and though he lacked striking gifts, his life was marked with fine devotion and persistence.

The Second Stage

in Philip's development came in due course. Those days of happy fellowship with Jesus before the miracle of feeding the multitude (John 6: 5-7), had resulted in considerable growth of character. He had been cheered to find that his impression of Christ was correct. No one likes to discover he has made a mistake in his friends, or to admit that his discrimination has been at fault. Philip was no exception in this. On the contrary, he found satisfaction in recalling his surprisingly accurate judgment of the Master's worth, and the confident manner in which he had commended Him to Nathanael. But the strength and serenity of that life surpassed anything Philip had conceived possible, while the power the Master wielded, giving health and hope to the despairing, was a cause of unceasing wonder. The only thing about which Philip felt any misgiving was the apparent indifference of Christ to public sentiment. The prudent disciple could not regard this without some uneasiness. He had personally been most careful all his life not to incur unnecessary criticism. His favourite method of progress had always been to take the line of least resistance. Prudence demanded it, and—it paid. That was why he had been so anxious not to make any mistake

about the call to follow Christ. Had the Master been other than He was, it would have brought nothing but ridicule on Philip, and no man could afford to forfeit the good opinion of his friends.

But that was just where Jesus seemed to lack a little prudence. None could doubt the wisdom and sincerity of His words. To look into that open face with its flashing eyes, to listen to those vibrant tones, now softly mellow like the calm music of evening, now wildly challenging as when the upgathered winds slipped their leash and roared through the rocky defiles of Jordan, was to feel the absolute truth of the Teacher's soul. Yet He spoke out uncaring for the opposition aroused. He brushed aside hoary traditions, without ceremony. He abrogated certain parts of the Law as superseded, saying quite decisively, "Ye have heard that it was said of old time . . . but I say . . ." And while there were some who were plainly in sympathy with such courageous utterances, Philip felt more and more that "the people who mattered"—the thoughtful and influential, who were the acknowledged religious leaders of the nation—were being alienated. Was that sound policy? Moreover, Philip, while he had been interested in political questions which had long agitated the Jewish mind, had been careful not to take an unpopular side. It was not safe. It was not even wise for a man who had any stake in the community, for Rome had a strong hand when she was roused, as Judas of Gamala found to his cost. That is why Philip viewed with grave concern Christ's apparent indifference to the crowds that followed Him. Doubtless the Master, with His profound belief in human sincerity, imagined the people wanted to hear

His Gospel. But did they? Philip had serious doubts about some of them. He recognized faces, here and there, of men who were avowed revolutionaries. He knew too, that while the majority were enraptured with the Saviour's teaching, when the pangs of hunger assailed them and they realised how far they were from the town, there would be a tumult. They would forget that they had voluntarily followed Him from place to place. All that they would remember was that they were hungry, and food was unprocurable. How would He face the famishing crowd? Did He realise that famine might easily give rise to frenzy and fanaticism, and that in the riotous scenes which would ensue, Rome would hold Christ responsible? It would be impossible to convince the authorities that He was blameless, and that these people had followed Him, like the fabled Pied Piper, of their own choice. No! The Jewish leaders, anxious to show their own blamelessness in the matter, and incidentally to repay some of the unmeasured criticisms of their conduct, would readily put the responsibility on Jesus.

> "Trifles light as air
> Are to the jealous, confirmations strong
> As proofs of holy writ."

The situation was fraught with grave possibilities. Philip was right in that. The Bread Riots which broke out in Britain in the hungry Forties, show the lengths to which famine will force men. The excesses to which fanaticism can lead are seen in Sir Hall Caine's graphic work "The Christian." There, under the denunciations of John Storm, the multi-

tudes of London throw reason to the winds. They mistake his condemnation of their wickedness, and misinterpreting his threats of divine judgment, take it that he is foretelling the doom of the city. Though he has said nothing to warrant it, even the day is fixed in the popular mind. Some sell their businesses. Crowds leave their homes and throng the public parks. His church is besieged by a terror-stricken mob which, unable to find admittance to the sanctuary, kneels in abject fear in the street without. It is the Derby Day. Deep clouds hang in the sky. Ominous thunders roll across the city, the domes and towers of which are illumined by blinding flashes of lightning, and as night falls, the panic-filled people wait for the dreadful hour to strike. Midnight passes, but nothing happens. A new day steals with benediction over the streets. Sudden reaction takes place, and some who had blessed the preacher as their divine deliverer, now denounce him as the arch-deceiver, seeking him out that they may wreak vengeance on him for fears unfulfilled. John Storm eventually falls beneath the angry blows of some whom he had simply sought to bless, and dies the victim of popular ignorance and hate. It is not too much to suggest that Philip felt the perils that might threaten his Master. But when Christ put the question to him, "Whence are we to buy bread that these may eat?" it proved that his anxiety was shared by the Lord Himself. It seemed a hopeless situation. The prudent mind had already estimated the cost: "Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them that every one may take a little."

It were good to be a prudent disciple of the Lord,

but it were better to trust Him implicitly, believing in His ability to meet any crisis that might arise. Like many of us, Philip was worrying himself unnecessarily. Christ had already seen the situation and the grounds for disquiet, but His sympathy with the hungry multitude was not more marked than His solicitude for the harassed disciple. He would have Philip learn, as well as those who might come after him, that even prudence must make allowance for the divine power. It is true that human foresight and care are indispensable, but is it not equally true that for some of life's emergencies they are totally inadequate? We are perplexed by the problems of human life, but in part that is due to our imperfect knowledge and our partial faith. Larger place for the divine resources must be given in all our efforts to remove poverty and want, and as we are willing to take Christ into account, even though our power to help the world be limited, we shall find that His compassion exceeds our calculations, and His provision of grace shall more than supply the wants of humanity.

The Third Stage

of Philip's development is marked by the quest of the Greeks (John 12:21). Though much time had elapsed since the needs of the multitude had been met, we may be sure the effect of that experience remained. Philip's character was forming slowly, but though he never surprised his friends with any great achievement, it was evident that he was growing in solid reliability and efficiency. It is a long time before the buried bulb gives any hint of life,

and longer still before the fragrant flower unfolds. But once its bonds are broken, colour, perfume, and symmetry, show the power of the life that lay dormant. So Philip's personality was growingly felt. And the coming of the Greeks proved it. They were either pilgrim-proselytes or traders who had come to Jerusalem at the time of the feast, and not only had they heard strange stories of the Galilean, but they had also listened to Him for themselves. The culture in His tones, the note of universality in His teaching, marked Him out at once as a man whose religious life was not only sincere, but broad as the sea itself. Moreover, He swept the souls of these Greeks as the writings of their own poets and the periods of their orators had never done. They wanted to meet Him. But how could this be done? Enquiries elicited the fact that one of Christ's friends bore a Greek name. It was Philip. Yet we are not convinced that that was the only reason why they appealed to this particular disciple. It was also because they saw this man to be quiet in manner, and one who wore the air of brotherly sympathy. They secured a word with him, without interrupting the Master's teaching, and said, "Sir, we would see Jesus."

Traces of the old lack of self-confidence are immediately noticeable. Instead of complying with their request, or at any rate, assuring them that he would take them to Christ at the first opportunity, Philip referred the matter to Andrew. "Would it be all right? These men were not Jews, and they had not stated their reasons for desiring a personal interview. What was his opinion?" At that moment the Master's discourse ended, and the visitors

were presented to Christ. Still diffident and undecided what our Lord's response would be, Philip stands aside while Andrew speaks to Him, and then, relieved as well as surprised, he listens to the exulting words with which Jesus welcomed these men of another nation. They are the heralds of a great multitude yet to hear the voice and feel the spell of that Master of men. They are as the golden streaks of dawn proclaiming the advent of a new day. And as the soul of Christ expressed its joyous hopes, Philip must have felt a pang of regret that he had given away the honour of bringing these men to the Saviour's side. It had been just what Christ desired, and he might have shared the satisfaction of that moment. Yet suppose, on the other hand, the Lord had resented it as an intrusion. . . . ? Over-prudent still! When would he have the courage to follow the leadings of his better self, or obey the impulse within? He was probably angry with himself that he had missed another chance of showing his faith in the divine mission of the Master. He may have felt that Jesus would regard it as wanting in loyalty to Himself. If he thought that, it only proved that courage was not the only thing he had still to learn.

Many a time, Jesus would look upon Philip, noting the hesitancy and fear of committing himself that still remained. But those eyes were all-discerning. Men say, "Love is blind." Is it? Love sees more clearly than anything else, and because the Lord loved each of His followers with profound affection, He saw qualities hidden from the common gaze. Some day, Philip would cast aside his fears. He would never be rash or adven-

turous, but his individuality would yet be developed, acting as a curb on the headstrong and impetuous, and with prudent counsel that took all the facts into account, perhaps saving the Apostles from some grievous mistakes in policy. Christ had "found" Philip; one day, when the period of instruction were complete, Philip would find himself. Till that time, the Master was content to wait patiently for the perfecting of His friends. It is our encouragement that He remains unchanged, and that there are no limits to either the divine patience or hope. Were it not so, we might well lose heart.

The Fourth Stage

reveals Philip still blundering towards the goal, and yet much the same man as he was at the commencement of his career as a disciple. Jesus and the Twelve are in the Upper Room. (John 14.) It is the last evening they were to spend together in that fateful week. A sense of impending disaster lies heavy on the company. Things had begun badly with the dispute about foot-washing, and although Christ had done the magnificently forgiving deed, and had apparently put the incident from Him, it was evident that He did not intend to risk such a scene again. He was going to end the matter by leaving them. This was Philip's first impression. More in sorrow than in anger, Christ spoke darkly of certain probable events that would mean the dissolution of their friendship, but as He proceeded, His words impinging on Philip's benumbed mind with the muffled beat of showers on a window-pane, a little of His meaning was grasped. No;

the disciple was mistaken. It was not because of what had happened that their Lord was leaving them; it was rather in pursuance of some plan which evidently He wanted to divulge, but could not. Philip read his own prudence into Christ's words. But when the Master spoke of going to the Father it seemed that some fuller information was needed, and Philip sought it. His first thoughts had been: Where were the disciples to find Christ in case of emergency? While He was away anything might happen—some question to which an answer ought to be immediately given, or some urgent matter which ought to be referred to the Lord Himself. How were they to know what to do? Now, however, the matter seemed too vague for any one to grasp, and Philip felt the ground slipping from beneath him, as he listened. It is the same Philip of yore who speaks: "Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us." But for once he had been imprudent. He had committed himself to the definite admission of ignorance as to Christ's meaning, and without intending it, he had given a stab to that tender heart. "Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know Me, Philip?" Here was further proof that, in spite of all Christ had said and been to that company, He had remained largely an enigma to them all, and Philip who had prided himself on the thoroughness with which he examined every step he took, had been as faulty as any of the Twelve.

After the culmination of the tragedy, Philip's natural tendency would be to sever his connection

with the company, but the patient work of Christ was beginning to bear fruit, and the disciple remained true to his vows. In the tumultuous days that followed, he found himself—his best self—even as Christ had discovered his sterling character at the commencement of his apostleship. When the rest were filled with dismay, Philip would be staunch and undaunted. Such a man would exert a beneficial influence upon the whole company, and though he does not take any action that brings him into prominence again, we are convinced that Philip played no small part in shaping the policy of the Apostles, and in establishing the infant church. The hesitancy he displayed earlier in his career, and his unwillingness to shoulder responsibility or to make decisions, were the defects of his qualities, and these would largely disappear so that he would be a distinct acquisition to the Apostolate.

Newman might have been describing Philip when he wrote:

"Time was when I shrank from what was right,
For fear of what was wrong;
I would not brave the sacred fight,
Because the foe was strong.

"But now I cast that finer sense
And sorer shame aside;
Such dread of sin was indolence,
Such aim at Heaven was pride.

"So when my Saviour calls, I rise
And calmly do my best;
Leaving to Him, with silent eyes
Of hope and fear, the rest.

"I step, I mount, where He has led,
Men count my haltings o'er;—
I know them; yet, though self I dread,
I love His precept more."

The Church needs men of prudence and sagacity in the direction of her affairs, and in these days when life is so complex, it is the calm, far-sighted soul, who can render service of primary importance. It is not only the man of outstanding ability, with enterprise and enthusiasm, who achieves great things, valuable as such qualities are. The contemplative and circumspect have also their part to play. Our one care must be, however, that while there is a definite place in the ranks of Christ's followers for these diverse temperaments, there shall be no confusing of prudence with timidity or lack of faith in the divine aid. It is conceivable that if only the Philip type had been found in the apostolic company, there would have been no such courageous conquests as made Pentecost memorable. There might have been no Reformation had Luther been afraid to make his momentous stand. The "Mayflower" would never have slipped her moorings, bearing her deathless band of noble-souled men and women across the rolling wastes of ocean, had only counsels of prudence prevailed. But adventurous enthusiasm plus the consecrated commonsense of the Christian heart, can still achieve much for God and humanity, and it is in this blending of opposites that Christ can use the endowments and individuality of His disciples to further the gracious work of the Kingdom, and to ennoble and redeem the race.

VI

NATHANAEL, THE DEVOUT

"Behold, an Israelite indeed in whom is no guile."

—JOHN 1:47.

NATHANAEL is a type which is happily not unknown to us even in these days. He stands essentially for the man who has the rare faculty of combining an interest in the world that now is, and in that which is to come, and doing it without cant or hypocrisy. He is one who, while engaged in the affairs of the market-place, can yet keep a space railed round, not the burial place of dead hopes sacred to the memory of higher things, but a quiet retreat, where the spirit can be refreshed, and the dust of the days be removed from the eyes so that they may not lose their power of vision. He does not degenerate into sickly sentimentality, so that healthy-minded men feel a natural repugnance at his other-worldliness. On the contrary, while they may not agree with his views, while they may think of him good-naturedly as no man's enemy but his own, they are yet impressed by his singularly sane attitude towards life, and are even more impressed by his genial and gentle spirit.

Such a man, as we conceive him, was Nathanael. He was the man of firm faith in spiritual things, who while peace-loving and lacking in those self-

assertive qualities sometimes supposed to be essential to success, was yet immovable when a question of principle arose: a man of quiet dignity and undoubted strength of character. The house of his soul had a window looking out on the dusty street with its toiling crowds and its chaffering commerce; it had also a window that commanded the sky, and just as Daniel prayed with his casement open toward Jerusalem, and Habakkuk mounted his spiritual watch-tower to hold communion with Jehovah, so Nathanael lifted his eyes from the things of time and sense to those which are unseen and eternal.

Such men are the salt of the earth. Their temper and devotion make for purity and ennoblement. In every age Christ needs the staunch and spiritually-minded who will add the weight of their influence to the teaching of His evangel, and who, by the consistent brightness of their faith, will, like the harbour lights flinging their welcoming beams in prodigal silver across the surging seas, show where the tempest-tossed may find eternal anchorage.

Nathanael's Call to Discipleship

presents some difficulty, for though the incident is plainly recorded, there is no mention of him among the Twelve except in the Fourth Gospel, while there is another named in the lists of the other writers, Bartholomew, of whom John never speaks. What is the inference? It is scarcely likely that John, who details the call of Andrew and himself, of Simon Peter, James, and Philip, would give so much notice to Nathanael if he were simply a private friend of Philip and nothing more, and so in

common with others who have given the matter careful consideration, we assume the identity of Nathanael with Bartholomew. The reasons for this may be stated. In the Fourth Gospel Bartholomew is never mentioned, though Nathanael is referred to twice, while in the Synoptics, and in the names of the disciples in the Upper Room after the resurrection, Bartholomew is placed in every case next to Philip, while Nathanael's name is not to be found. The probability, therefore, is that Bartholomew was the patronymic or surname, and that both names indicate the same man. This identity is further supported by the fact that Philip and Bartholomew are mentioned together in every list of the Apostles which the records give. After that memorable event, which would be burnt in on Philip's memory when Jesus called him to the way of discipleship, Philip made his way to his friend. "Philip findeth Nathanael," is a simple statement which conveys much. We have already noted Philip's cautious methods of procedure. He had passed through an experience that had moved him profoundly, and if it were true that this were indeed the Christ, he wanted to share his discovery with Nathanael. The man of prudence and the man of piety had much in common. Doubtless the coming of the Baptist had been discussed frequently by them, and the possible advent of the Messiah had impelled Nathanael to more diligent study of the prophecies relating to that event. That he had always been a man who loved the holy writings goes without saying. Great spirituality and prayerful vigilance are never far removed from reverent regard for the Scriptures. But the quiet spirit of

Nathanael had found little in the vehement Baptist to appeal to him, and the outspokenness of the preacher, together with the inevitable bitterness on the part of the Pharisees, had caused a turmoil for which Nathanael's guileless heart had no liking whatever. Moreover, in the dust of controversy, as is so often the case, the facts were obscured. There was much heat and little light. Hence, Nathanael felt that if he were to find a solution for the problems confronting him, he must have recourse to the word of God rather than to the words of men.

Philip's quest proves that he was acquainted with both the man and his habits. The fact that he found Nathanael under the fig tree suggests that he knew exactly where to look for him. Few were familiar with this retiring and secluded soul, but probably fewer still were familiar with his retreat. Philip knew, and having first ascertained that Nathanael was not in his house, he would go straight to the quiet place under the trees where Nathanael spent so many hours in prayerful meditation on the divine Scriptures. Why under the fig tree? This suggests much. First, it was daytime, when the tiny one-roomed house would be filled with the bustle of domestic duties, and if he were to obtain the quiet needed to pore over the sacred page, he must seek seclusion elsewhere. But then, while the bright sunshine allures most of us out of doors, to the oriental the sun meant blistering heat with its attendant glare and discomfort, and so he sought this leafy sanctuary where he could commune with God.

Yet we may ask again, why in the daytime? Was

he one of the privileged classes who "toil not neither do they spin"? That is ruled out when we remember that he was a friend of Philip. We suggest that there is here another clue to the singular piety of Nathanael. The probability is that he was engaged in the fishing industry like several of the others, nor is this mere conjecture. After the disastrous close of our Lord's ministry, when some of the disciples resolved to return to the old life, forsaking the hot city with its plotting priests for the spray-laden breezes and the simple life of the lake, Nathanael was one of them. "Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a-fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee." Who were "they"? "Thomas, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other of His disciples." If Nathanael were engaged in this craft it follows that the daytime was his only chance of leisure. If he, therefore, were out with the boats during the night, he must have been devoting time to the pursuit of his investigations regarding the Messiah that should have been spent in sleep. Or if, on the other hand, as seems possibly more in keeping with this gentle soul, he were engaged in some other occupation than the strenuous life of the sea, it may be that he was interested in marketing the fish. This would entail rising at daybreak, when the boats came in, but by the afternoon, he would be free to follow his own bent. Be that as it may, we find a man who could fill his place in the world and yet be deeply religious—a combination which, we are assured by some, is very unusual—and what is more, Nathanael was able to mingle with men and yet retain his pure-hearted loyalty to God.

Nathanael was the prototype of the souls of whom Keble sings. There are some gifted lives

> ". . . in this loud stunning tide
> Of human care and crime
> With whom the melodies abide
> Of th' everlasting chime:
> Who carry music in their heart
> Through dusky lane and wrangling mart,
> Plying their daily task with busier feet
> Because their secret souls a holy strain repeat."

Nathanael's Character as a Disciple

When Philip discovered his friend beneath the shady branches, it was, as he expected, to find him deeply wrapped in thought. Probably the portion of the Scriptures he had been studying lay across his knees as the footstep of his friend fell upon his ear. He looked up to see a curious light in Philip's face. "We have found Him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write." It was not strange that Philip should put it in this way. Moses had declared that "the Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me." The prophets had borne witness to the same truth, each from his own standpoint, differing according to the varying revelation. One had conceived the Messiah as a great king, who should rule the people with equity. Another had emphasised His wise government, and had added title to title—"the Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace"—to describe His

glorious attributes. Yet another had seen Him as dignified and yet so humble that He would ride into His capital not with the glittering cavalcade, the military splendour of a ruler who conquered by force of arms, but upon the peaceful ass, as though He would lay siege to men's souls by the sweet assaults of love.

Intensely Spiritual

Nathanael longed as only the righteous could for that glorious day when the Messiah's reign would commence. Guileless himself, he detested the unscrupulous ways of the worldling, and felt his soul sicken at the hypocrisy and hollowness of so much that passed for religion. That would account for his deep interest in all the prophecies that pointed to that new era. But the more he read, the less he seemed to understand. It is comparatively easy for us in the light of the Christian revelation, to relate the apparently conflicting qualities of the Christ. We know that He manifested traits of character that seem in themselves irreconcilable, and yet they blended in one perfect whole. There never was such humility stooping to the lowliest life, nor yet such kingly dignity; such love poured forth liberally as the gushing waters of a mountain spring, and yet such hatred of pretence and iniquity; such tenderness to the polluted, yet such unqualified condemnation of that which pollutes; such holiness and exaltation of character, and yet such a merciful identification of the saintly with the sinful. In a nobler and larger sense than Shakespeare ever intended, we can say:

"He only, in a general honest thought
And common good to all, made one of them.
His life was gentle, and the elements
So mixed in him that Nature might stand up
And say to all the world, 'This was a man!' "

Nathanael lived in the dim light of Judaism. He could interpret only imperfectly, and relate only partially, the varying concepts of Christ which the writings gave. Yet though what the rabbis taught carried him only part of the way in his quest for truth, he searched the Scriptures diligently for himself. His Bible was his one book. Like the Bereans of a later day, he tested things by the Word of God, and while, man of prayer as he was, he spoke to his Maker beneath the fig-tree's shade, he there waited in meditation on the prophets' pages that God might in turn speak to him.

Devout in Temper

Nathanael was also a man of well-founded convictions. He had thought long on these matters. It is true, that in his case, this brought some narrowness with it, though it were better to have a stream confined by its banks so that it runs deep to the ocean than to have mere breadth so that the waters become a stagnant swamp. Depth and breadth denote development, and that came to him as time went on.

From what we have adduced we expect to find Philip's statement challenged. He put the matter to his friend with some degree of caution and reserve, as though inviting question, and Nathanael was a man of far too settled opinions about these

things to be easily swayed from the direction to which his thinking pointed. Indeed he may have detected the hesitancy in Philip's manner, and the word "Nazareth" at once put him on his guard. He knew the Scriptures too well to be lured aside by any such novel theory. Nazareth? "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?"

Nathanael was right in that. Although so many had written of the Messiah, no mention was made of Nazareth. He was to come of the royal Davidic line, and Bethlehem was to be the place of His birth, but there was no word about the little provincial town where He

> "... wrought
> With human hands the creed of creeds
> In loveliness of perfect deeds
> More strong than all poetic thought."

Besides, not only was the weight of prophetic witness against Philip's declaration, but there was also prejudice born of preconceived ideas of what the Messiah would be. Nathanael could not be expected to anticipate the glorious self-effacement of the Son of God, nor could he conceive such sublime lowliness of life that was in itself a title to true nobility. And again, prophet and poet, saint and seer, had longed for the fulfilment of God's promise, yet they had passed on without the gladness of fruition. Philip had exercised considerable caution by consulting Nathanael for confirmation of his own beliefs; he could not complain if Nathanael in turn showed some hesitation about accepting such a stupendous truth.

But now the matter could be put to the test. Philip was not disposed to commit himself further. He said, in effect, "Do not take my word alone. I profess no ability to argue the point, for thou art better versed in the Scriptures than I, but come and see!" And surely, that is the way to settle difficulties of faith. So many men are content to take the word of others about Christ, rather than by careful study of the Gospels and by personal communion with Him to make His acquaintance for themselves. They are content to remain on the fringe of a faith that can bring added strength to character, yielding peace of heart, and infinite enrichment of life. They justify their indifference or doubts by the example of some dubious life which has used the cloak of religion to cover the untended sores of the leprous soul. Yet men do not condemn all banknotes because they have seen a counterfeit; the spurious is positive proof of the value of the genuine note. So it is not by the Christian who may fall far short of his own ideals in spite of continued striving, still less is it by the man who makes profession of a faith he never possessed, that Christ is to be known. First-hand acquaintance results in friendship.

Impassioned When Convinced

Nathanael proves our point. He went at once to the Master, and all his dubiety took flight. "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile." Such was Christ's comment. He read the innermost soul of Nathanael, as He reads the souls of all.

"Thy kind but searching glance can scan
The very wounds that shame would hide."

There is evident surprise in Nathanael's tone as he asks, "Whence knowest Thou me?" He had come to form an opinion of this reputed Messiah, and instead he is greeted with the Messiah's opinion of him. And what an opinion! Too often we think of the Divine omniscience as a thing from which to shrink. There is a certain feeling of awe inspired by the words, "All things are naked and laid open before the eyes of Him with whom we have to do," and the thought that "Thou God seest me" has awakened too often more fear than faith, more dread than devotion. H. G. Wells makes this confession: "I who write was so set against God thus rendered. . . . I thought of Him as a fantastic monster perpetually spying, perpetually listening, perpetually waiting to condemn. . . . He was over me and about my feebleness and silliness and forgetfulness as the sky and sea would be about a child drowning in mid-Atlantic. When I was still only a child of thirteen by the grace of the true God in me, I flung this lie out of my mind."

"Ah, God is other than we think;
His ways are far above
The height of reason, and are reached
Alone by childlike love."

It is perfectly true that Christ reads the heart as none other can, and true that He knows the worst about men, but it is a glorious fact that He also knows the best about them. He sees their latent capacity for fine service and heroic living.

He witnesses the constant war they wage against evil tendencies, and He is swift, yea, none swifter, to commend and encourage by His appreciative words. While there is wonderful mercy for those who have sinned against the light, and restoring grace for the wayward prodigal, there is also sublime faith in the powers of the soul that has evaded many of life's pitfalls. Christ is full of compassion for the soiled soul of the street, and His pity must have been stirred again and again by the spectacle of misused gifts. Describing Sidney Carton, the brilliant yet dissolute young lawyer, Charles Dickens says: "Waste forces within him, and a desert all around, this man stood still on his way across a silent terrace, and saw lying in the wilderness before him, a mirage of honourable ambition, self-denial, and perseverance. . . . A moment, and it was gone. Climbing to a high chamber, in a well of houses, he threw himself down in his clothes on a neglected bed, and its pillow was wet with wasted tears. Sadly, sadly the sun rose; it rose upon no sadder sight than the man of good abilities and good emotions, incapable of their directed exercise, incapable of his own help and his own happiness, sensible of the blight on him, and resigning himself to let it eat him away."

If Dickens felt what he thus wrote, Christ must have felt more acutely than words can express, the tragedy of wasted talents. But that same compassionate sensitiveness meant also keen appreciation of the unsullied soul, the life lived in the light. Hence the value of such a man to the apostolic company.

Nathanael's impassioned utterance can be ex-

plained only by his intuitive sense of Christ's sublimity. It says much for the discernment of a devout soul that he who had been so non-committal regarding the validity of Christ's Messianic character, should give voice to such a declaration, "Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel." It says even more for the impression produced by the personality of Jesus. Was it merely because the unusual had occurred, and that his secret soul had been read by Christ that he spoke in this way? He was to have greater cause for faith. The sincere, guileless one, who had striven to live up to his light, should have more light. That is the Divine way. "To every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath." There is nothing unfair about this principle. On the contrary, it is manifestly just. The servant in our Lord's parable had so used his five talents that he doubled them. He was worthy of larger opportunities because he had used so wisely those already enjoyed. It was the man who had left his talent buried in the earth from whom it was taken. In the Mammoth Caves of Kentucky there is a stream which flows there in the darkness, and strangely enough fish abound in it. But although they have the place for eyes, they are bereft of sight. Nature has taken away what in those waters of perpetual blackness would be useless, and the fish are blind. Use or lose seems to be the law of the spiritual world as well as the natural. Nathanael had used the light that came from the incomplete revelation of God's purpose, and because he had ordered his life aright, because

he had made the Word a lamp unto his feet and a light unto his path, he emerged from the cavernous ways of the old dispensation to the high plateau on which shone the radiance of the Sun of Righteousness.

Nathanael's Contribution to Discipleship

This is difficult to determine, for no details are available. Only twice—here in the first chapter and again in the last chapter of the Fourth Gospel—are his activities mentioned. And yet we know enough to suggest what his part would be during those three years and in subsequent times. Such a man would create an atmosphere of practical piety in which the fair fruits of the Spirit would ripen fast. He would still remain the unobtrusive, meditative student of spiritual things, pondering the winsome words of the Master, and possibly, because of his keen susceptibility and retentive memory, contributing much material, when, in later years, a written record of Christ's words was begun. But this is indisputable: his spirit and noble temper would raise the tone of the Twelve, making for a larger measure of peace and good-fellowship than otherwise might have been the case.

Jerome K. Jerome has instanced the influence of such a man. A stranger arrived one day in a Bloomsbury boarding-house. No one knew whence he came or who he was, but from the first evening he made his presence felt. He spoke no word of religion. He did not indulge in criticism of the coarse-fibred people about him. But he seemed to have touched a secret spring in their breasts. Petty

meannesses that every one had practised unblushingly became impossible. The harsh word was left unspoken, and the unworthy thing left undone. Why? Not one of the boarders could have put it into words, except that unconsciously they began to strive to merit his good opinion, and to live up to his high estimate of their personal character. In three months, the whole tone of the house was altered. Nor must this be explained away simply as an imaginary situation created by a brilliant novelist. It is what we have all experienced. We have met men and women in business who have wielded a similar influence. When they were about, we found it easier to do what was right, harder to do the mean or dishonourable thing. They seemed to radiate sunshine. They set a high standard for their own lives, and instinctively we found ourselves not only accepting that standard as admirable in itself, but also felt impelled to live up to it. Such a fine, saintly soul as Nathanael would have a similar effect on his fellow apostles. Nor is that all. He exemplifies:

The Value of Virtue

even when it is not accompanied by brilliant gifts. He did no great deed; he did not distinguish himself by either oratory or organising ability. We have no record of moving speech or thrilling heroism. But if his gifts were not brilliant, his life was. He reflected the glory of his Master, commending the Gospel by his quiet devotion to everything good, and by the consistent conduct that indicated his force of character. His worth is proved by the

fact that Christ called him to be one of His intimate friends. His guileless nature held no secret chambers where unworthy ambitions lurked, waiting to seize every opportunity for self-advancement. He had no ulterior motives, and because he had been faithful, the fuller light was given to him. Prejudices born of imperfect understanding of the facts melted like the wreathing mists of the valley.

Nathanael had used the lamp of God's word when there was no apparent possibility of the divine promises being fulfilled, when his pure soul grew sad at the spectacle of duplicity and hypocrisy in the professed leaders of religion, and it guided him till the Christ came. We are reminded of Robert Louis Stevenson's story of his boyhood. He and his companions used to take bull's-eye lanterns, and buckling them with their belts under their coats, they would set off on all manner of adventurous expeditions. The light was wholly obscured, but in the dark it was something to know that each carried his lantern with him. The true-hearted Christian has a lamp like that. It is the lamp of hope. Though the night be dark about him, yet he knows that he has only to do his part: to plod persistently on, and eventually the sun will shine.

Browning seems to have had a similar idea in mind, for he sings:

> "If I stoop,
> Into a dark tremendous sea of cloud,
> It is but for a time. I press God's lamp
> Close to my breast. Its splendour
> Soon or late will pierce the gloom;
> I shall emerge one day."

From that lamp, the flame of love—for God and for mankind—will shine forth, cheering other benighted souls by its ray.

The Power of the Pure-hearted

Tennyson's young knight could sing:

> "My strength is as the strength of ten
> Because my heart is pure,"

and such words fit the character of this guileless Apostle. "An Israelite indeed"—there was none of the trickery and sharp practice of Jacob, the unregenerate, in Nathanael, and while there were tendencies in some of the Twelve to seek preferment in the Master's kingdom, there was only the pure white flame of love in Nathanael's soul. He had thrown in his lot with Christ not for what he might gain from such a course, but with the uncalculating choice born of a great affection, without stopping to analyse motives, or counting the cost. Although, as we have said, no great deed can be attributed to him, we may yet regard him as one who preferred to be rather than to do—to be known for his quiet devotion to the highest than for his dashing exploits or stirring deeds. But these are positive, not negative qualities. "Blessed are the pure in heart," said Jesus, "for they shall see God." It is evident from that glad recognition of the Messiah's glory which leapt to Nathanael's lips as he looked into Christ's face, that this promise was in some measure anticipated. As the Son of God He stood as the revealer of the Father; as the King of Israel He embodied

the Messianic ideal. Confronting the devout Nathanael was the very Christ whom not having seen he had loved and longed for, and to those powers of perception he already possessed came the promise of larger light. "Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

Such is the character of Nathanael, the devout. What power a man like him can wield! To be susceptible to spiritual impulses without losing anything of sagacity or strength, to be devout and at the same time to be diligent in daily duty, to be true to the past and yet to be progressive as light increases—that is the kind of man to whom Christ can entrust fuller opportunities and a larger sphere of service. We commend him to the thoughtful as worthy of emulation. Given sane, strong, spiritually-minded men guiding the affairs of State or of business, there would be an appreciable raising of tone in every direction. Old injustices and tyrannies of which the world is weary, but which it has not the means to shake off would be abolished, and the Gospel would again prove itself to be the power of God unto salvation. Devoutness plus devotion would bring the world nearer to the heart of God than it has yet been.

VII

MATTHEW, THE MAN OF BUSINESS

"As Jesus passed forth from thence He saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and He saith unto him, Follow Me."

—MATTHEW 9:9.

THE call of Matthew, the publican, while presenting some features in common with that of the other Apostles, yet marks a new departure. At least three of them had some preparatory religious experience, and two had been in contact with Christ before the summons that separated them from daily toil came to them. Andrew and John after that first evening with Jesus would find it comparatively easy to obey the call when it came, and though the other six were of plebeian origin, they were respectable members of society, engaged in honourable if arduous callings. Matthew stood in dark contrast to them all, but as a picture painted only in the primary colours would be garish and crude in the extreme, as it is essential that the subdued and even the sombre shades should be introduced in order to give it balance and relief, thus Christ called this man into the privileged circle that not only might the catholicity of His church be demonstrated, but also that it might be proved for all time that none in whom the work of grace has begun, no matter

what his antecedents, should be denied equal standing. Thus the call of Matthew marked an epoch.

Matthew Was a Man of a Different Type

To regard him simply as a government official, is misleading. He was that. Rome had conquered the Jewish nation, and she had asserted the privileges of the conqueror, not only making the vanquished help to pay for the conquest, but also to contribute to the cost of keeping themselves under the yoke. So taxes were levied upon Palestine by the imperial power, and Matthew was one of those who had secured a position in the civil service. Now it can be quite plainly seen that for one who enjoyed a fairly secure and lucrative place, Christ's call to discipleship involved a good deal. There was the satisfaction of an assured income to which, by a measure of craft and an anæsthetised conscience, certain considerable additions might be made, and whatever may be said, that offered a more pleasant life than the hardships and precarious livelihood of fishermen. But if it were harder for Matthew to obey that call, it were surely still harder for Christ to give such a man a place among His chosen friends. Dr. A. B. Bruce has said: "The call of Matthew signally illustrates a very prominent feature in the public action of Jesus, namely, His utter disregard of the maxims of worldly wisdom. A publican disciple, much more a publican apostle, could not fail to be a stumbling-block to Jewish prejudice. . . . Yet while perfectly aware of this fact, Jesus invited to the intimate fellowship of disciplehood one who had pursued the

occupation of a tax-gatherer . . . like One who knew that His work concerned all nations and all time."

Thus Matthew belonged to a despised class, and the reason for the stigma attaching to his office is not far to seek. These officials were not appointed directly by the government, neither were the rates which were levied definitely fixed. On the contrary, the raising of revenue was sublet to financiers who, while undertaking to secure a given sum for the exchequer, were allowed to use their own methods of collecting the money. It was recognised that they were not rendering such service and taking the risk for love, except love of money, and so some margin was allowed to these public-spirited men who were willing to help Rome to collect her dues. For the most part, they were themselves Romans, and they did not relish the task of getting money from the foreigner. But there were others with inherited financial instincts, who like Jacob, their ancestor, were not too particular about these matters, and who could secure the desired end without being too scrupulous about the means. Consequently, the contracts were again sublet to members of the Jewish community, and this was the root of bitterness. For love of gain, these men sacrificed patriotism and principles. They ranged themselves on the side of the oppressor, and became in turn oppressors of their own countrymen, for human nature being what it is, when they were incited to be unscrupulous in the cause of their employers, they were not slow in feathering their own nests.

Matthew was a tax-gatherer, and in common with his class, he had probably taken advantage of his op-

portunities. He had become an outcast from decent society. He had forfeited the respect of honest men, if not of himself, and in addition, he had found it no difficult matter to stifle conscience and to resort to the tricks of his trade. An honest tax-gatherer was almost a contradiction in terms. The law was in his own hands, and he could extend its requirements almost at will. In short, he found it to his interest to live up to the reputation men gave him, and he became a dishonest, untruthful rogue, whose rapacity was conditioned only by the rateable value of the merchants who brought their goods into the province. Possibly too much may be argued from these generalisations. There were good and bad in most crafts, it is true, and Matthew may have been the exception that proves the rule. That is, however, scarcely likely, for although the other Evangelists name him as one of the apostles, it is only in his gospel that he describes himself as "Matthew, the publican." It is as though he were admitting the truth of all that term connotes so that he might show more fully the magnanimous Master who called him from his place of sordid money-making. But be that as it may, we are confronted with a man with a past, a man who had certainly sided with the alien conqueror against his own people, and who had lost caste in consequence.

All this would not make it any easier for him to join the circle of the Twelve. What kind of reception might he expect? Would they not look askance at him? Although they themselves were of the people, this man was one who had voluntarily sided with the common foe and who had shut himself off from everything honest and honourable. Why, then,

did Christ choose a man like Matthew? That our Lord knew the type of man he was goes without saying. He read that sinful soul as fully as He had previously read the heart of the guileless Nathanael. What did those pure eyes see in Matthew? There is only one answer. Christ called him, not because he was a man with a past, but because he was a man with a future. In that poor, stunted life, the Saviour saw potential greatness. The very wording of the passage is suggestive of this: "He saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom." While others looked on him with the indignant eyes of the trader who had been robbed by exaction, or with the scornful gaze of the patriotic Jew who saw only the toll-booth with its iniquitous extortion, Jesus saw *a man*. There is a beautiful legend that bears on Christ's capacity for seeing the beautiful. A dog lay dead in the gutter of an eastern street, and the boys who were looking at it, were joined by two or three loiterers. It was a pitiable object, one of the pariahs of the city, and it was unlikely that the sympathy denied it in life would be bestowed on it now. "Filthy beast," said one. "Look, he has lost an eye." "And see how his ear has been torn in fighting," said another. "Skin and bone, and his hair all matted," remarked a third. A stranger had also stopped to look, and hearing these comments, he said, "Yea, but look how white and even are his teeth. Even pearls could not shine with greater lustre." He passed on. "Who is that?" asked the first speaker. "Why, you know him. It is Jesus, the Galilean."

Perhaps, in Christ's judgment, this tax-collector had been forced into this ignoble task by pressure

of circumstances. It is so easy to condemn, so difficult to make allowance for the mistaken course of others. Only those who have been the victim of life's happenings, or who have grown almost desperate under the bludgeonings of fate, can be pitiful when they look on the tragedy of wasted gifts or the misuse of talents. Francis Thompson, that strange, sorrowful son of the world, could write of things as they are because he was flung into contact with the flotsam and jetsam of London. He describes the city thus:

"A region whose hedgerows have set to brick, whose soil is chilled to stone; where flowers are sold and women; where the men wither and the stars; whose streets to me on the most glittering day are black. For I unveil their secret meanings. I read their human hieroglyphs, I diagnose from a hundred occult signs the disease which perturbs their populous pulses. Misery cries out to me from the kerb-stone, despair passes me by in the way; I discern limbs laden with fetters impalpable, but not imponderable; I hear the shaking of invisible lashes, I see men dabbled with their own oozing life."

Christ did not condone the evil courses of this man, but He saw what others had missed: the possibilities of such a soul when once the work of grace had commenced. That is why Christ wanted him.

Matthew Was a Man of Different Temperament

Before the call came to Matthew, the Master had returned to Capernaum, where He had evidently made His quarters for a time. He was already

well-known in the town, for in Luke's narrative treating of this period, he says: "Great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by Him of their infirmities." Amid the crowd, or perhaps standing on the edge of it, there was one whom every one knew, but whom no one wanted to know. He had, however, no eyes for the scornful looks turned on him. He was entranced by the Master in the midst. When Christ spoke, it seemed to Matthew that the message was addressed not so much to the multitude, as to one man, and that was himself. He saw his own life, as it were, stripped naked of all its excuses and self-justification, and the spectacle of his own black soul stood before him like an accusing figure.

> "A silent court of justice in his breast,
> Himself the judge and jury, and himself
> The prisoner at the bar, ever condemned;
> And that drags down his life."

None knew the effect produced by this Divine Teacher on the tax-gatherer of the city except the Master and Matthew, and few would suspect him of anything more than casual curiosity when they saw him there. As he went back to his work, he would laugh at his own impressionableness, and strive to thrust aside his scruples when later on some untutored peasant or protesting merchant fell into his clutches. Yet there was a fatal fascination for him in the Nazarene. He could not refrain from listening again and again to His matchless wisdom, nor could he banish the tones of that voice nor the tender look of that face when he returned home.

Ralph Connor relates the impression made by the young minister who had been trying to conduct a service among the wild ranchers of the West. It had been a failure, but undaunted by the opposition, that earnest young soul said to the schoolmaster, "It's true! I feel it's true! Men can't live without Him, and be men!" The other felt the intense conviction and the courage of the man, and he wrote, "Long after I went to my shack that night, I saw before me the eager face with the luminous eyes, and heard the triumphant cry, 'I feel it's true! Men can't live without Him, and be men!'" Such an experience must have been Matthew's as the words of Christ came back in the silence of the night, and the events of subsequent days deepened the impression, still further preparing the way for the call to discipleship.

Matthew's memories of those days may well be trusted. A paralysed man was brought to Jesus, and out of that arose the controversy about His power to forgive sins. The Master had said, "Son, be of good cheer: thy sins be forgiven thee," and at once the Scribes accused Him of blasphemy. Blasphemy, because He had spoken in this way? He took up their challenge. Which was easier, to speak forgiveness to this man's soul, or to give power to his paralysed body? Christ waited for the answer to His question, while the crowd looked interestedly on the contestants. Then seeing that no reply was forthcoming, our Lord said to His critics, with the stricken sufferer lying before Him, "That ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins (then saith He to the sick

of the palsy), Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house."

The multitudes marvelled, but Matthew mused on this new demonstration of Christ's power with growing conviction. If this Teacher could forgive sins, and could give strength and deliverance to one so helpless, was it not possible that He could do something for the self-weary, sinful soul of a tax-gatherer? The question circled in Matthew's mind. He had almost resolved to put the matter to Christ Himself, and yet—it might mean giving up everything. Could he earn a living in any other way? Who would give employment to a tax-gatherer? He was worse than a dog! Perhaps, by and by, when he had saved more, he would be able to give up the position which had seemed agreeable enough until this hour, but which now, almost in spite of himself, he hated. Give up his work just because these old spectres had been stirred? No; it seemed ridiculous! He, the successful swindler, the man of such fine money-making capacity, abandon a position of comparative affluence for penury? If he were in more congenial circumstances, he might well consider the religious life, but it did not seem reasonable that he should forfeit everything for which he had worked and schemed.

There is no battlefield where the struggle is more fierce or where the tide of victory between contending forces ebbs and flows with such uncertainty as on the field of the soul, and we can well believe that Matthew felt that those trustful eyes of Christ, looking across the crowd, searched the depths of his being, and as a torch held aloft in a cavern re-

veals the horror of the lurking darkness, and the unspeakable terror of its abysmal gloom, Matthew saw the vile recesses of his heart. Like voices in that cavern, giving rise to echoes that rang and reverberated through dim terraces and ghostly arches, Christ's words kept recurring to his mind, calling him to surrender to the good, and yet prudence seemed to check such a step. After all, he was a man of business. He had to view things in a practical way, and . . . We are reminded of Scrooge's remonstrance when Marley visited him that night, bidding him seek the better way. "But you were always a good man of business, Jacob!" To which the shade of Jacob Marley replied, liftings its cumbrous chain, "Business! mankind was my business. The common welfare was my business; charity, mercy, forbearance, and benevolence were all my business. The dealings of my trade were but a drop of water in the comprehensive ocean of my business!"

However, the hour of deliverance struck. When Christ came by and summoned Matthew to follow Him, there was immediate obedience, because, as we have suggested, the matter had already been weighed for some time, and this was the deciding factor. Jesus spoke to the better self, and it was as though the divine finger pressed a secret spring in the soul. Lowell sings:

> "Be noble! and the nobleness that lies
> In other men, sleeping but never dead,
> Will rise in majesty to meet thine own;
> Then wilt thou see it gleam in many eyes,
> Then will pure light around thy path be shed,
> And thou wilt nevermore be sad and lone."

In the fullest sense it was so with our Lord, and Matthew felt the impact of that mighty personality upon his striving soul. The flood of pent-up feelings at last broke loose, carrying everything before it. The supposed prudence which bade him take heed how he jeopardised his livelihood, was flung aside. Christ who had set the paralysed free from his hampering bonds had wrought a similar gracious work in the soul of Matthew, and he now exulted in a freedom which he had never before thought possible.

We can see the look of keen joy in his face, and almost hear the sigh of relief as he left the toll-house and the sordid business in which he was engaged. The beginnings of the Christian life are supposed by some to mean the end of all that gives rise to gladness and hope, but as John Masefield has shown in *The Everlasting Mercy*, the conversion of Saul Kane, the poacher-roué, was truly the birth hour of delight and joy.

> "I did not think, I did not strive,
> The deep peace burnt my me alive;
> The bolted door had broken in,
> I knew that I had done with sin.
> I knew that Christ had given me birth
> To brother all the souls on earth,
> And every bird and every beast
> Should share the crumbs broke at the feast.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> The station brook to my new eyes,
> Was babbling out of Paradise;
> The waters rushing from the rain
> Were singing Christ has risen again.
> I thought all earthly creatures knelt
> From rapture of the joy I felt."

Matthew's experience was similar. This hour was the greatest he had ever known, and he must express his gratitude in some tangible way. A simple feast was prepared, and the Master was the honoured Guest. But there were others, and it is a pitiful sidelight on Matthew's life that those who were bidden were largely tax-gatherers and other outcasts. The reason was that these were the only friends he possessed, and it plainly demonstrates the depths to which he had sunk in plying his trade. He had been found at business, but he had almost been lost there; Christ's compassion and faith in him were his salvation. But there were other reasons for this feast, as well as a celebration of his deliverance from what had become a hateful bondage. He was giving his erstwhile friends an opportunity of meeting the Master for themselves, perhaps in the hope that similar blessing might come to them. He was openly declaring himself on the side of Christ; and what is more, he was definitely committing himself to the new life. Just as Elisha, when called to the prophetic office, slew the yoke of oxen with which he had been ploughing, and with the wooden implements kindled a fire and made a feast for his friends, so Matthew pledged himself to the service of the Master.

We may be sure that Christ never graced a more congenial board, for with these hapless souls about Him, He was meeting needs that lay near to His great heart. But in spite of that, there were some who levelled their arrows of venom against Him and His associates. The Pharisees lodged their protest with the disciples against the unseemly conduct of their Master, thus eating and drinking with out-

casts of disreputable character, and deeply though Jesus must have felt the unwarranted criticism, it called forth that expression of love which has been of immeasurable comfort to sin-sick souls: "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. . . . I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Moreover, He commends the course Matthew had pursued. It was indeed a time of rejoicing. If the return of the Prodigal demanded the killing of the fatted calf, and filling the evening hours with mirth, this too justified rejoicing. Here was one who had risen from the depths of despair and defilement. He had seen the glimmering of hope shining like the morning star in his sky, and he could not but be glad. So, in spite of the carping critics, Matthew embarked on his new course with deeper happiness because he had tried to share the blessing that had come to him.

Matthew Was a Man of Different Talents

Just as he was of a different type from the disciples already called, his gifts were of another order. He was a man of disciplined and developed powers. Admittedly, he had misused those powers, but at least he was a man of sagacity and skill. He was destined to use them now in the highest of all service. He was versed in the affairs of the marketplace, and understood men as few of his associates in the Apostolate could. He was less likely to wait for an "inspiration" than some of the others, for he had learned the lessons of daily drudgery—a school that can teach much that is of the first im-

portance in practical efficiency. Kingsley says: "Thank God every morning when you get up that you have something to do that day which must be done whether you like it or not. Being forced to work and forced to do your best will breed in you a hundred virtues which the idle never know."

In the dust of daily life, we sometimes fail to see the sublimity of common things, and the opportunities with which the place of service is enriched. Many a quality is developed there which otherwise might lie dormant, or at any rate remain but partly utilised. Goethe says: "Talent develops itself in solitude; character in the stream of life." Even though Matthew had not progressed far in the moral realm, he had, nevertheless, learned how to turn to account the powers he possessed. That is something. To become sagacious and far-seeing, to be able to keep calm in the crises that come in every life, and to utilise our gifts to the full, may mean the beginning of better things. Where can patience, courage, self-reliance and loyalty to principle, be tested more than in the great sphere of the world's work? These qualities are developed only under difficulty, and if we remember that life is one great educative opportunity, in which valuable lessons are taught and by which character is shaped and strengthened, we shall be brought to the way of blessedness. Henry Drummond has said with splendid discernment: "Ledgers and lexicons, business letters, domestic duties, striking of bargains, writing of examinations, handling of tools—these are the conductors of the eternal. . . . No man *dreams* integrity, accuracy and so on. He cannot learn them by reading about them. These things require their

wire as much as electricity. . . . A workshop, therefore, or an office, or a school of learning, is a gigantic conductor. An office is not a place for making money—it is a place for making character. A workshop is not a place for making machinery—it is a place for making men: not for turning wood, for fitting engines, for founding cylinders—to God's eye, it is a place for founding character; it is a place for fitting in the virtues to one's life, for turning out honest, modest-tempered, God-fearing men. A school of learning is not so much a place for making scholars, as a place for making souls. And he who would ripen and perfect the eternal element in his being will do this by attending to the religious duties of his daily task, recognising the unseen in its seen, and so turning three-fourths of each day's life into an ever-acting means of grace."

Matthew was not the first to receive the Divine call to nobler service in the place of daily toil. While Moses tended the sheep of Jethro, his father-in-law, in the deserts of Midian, he saw with wondering eyes the burning bush, and heard Jehovah call him to that great enterprise. While Gideon threshed his wheat down by the wine-press, the summons to valiant service as the deliverer of his people smote on his ear. Saul seeking his father's asses, met the prophet who had come to anoint him King of Israel, just as later on David found the path that led to power began as he went on an errand to his brothers. In the Invalides in Paris there is a series of mosaics, illustrating the valiant life of Joan of Arc. The first shows her, a peasant girl in Domremy, with her sheep about her, but an angel stands behind whispering in her ear. The message is almost incredible.

She was to become the deliverer of France. Unskilled though she was in warfare, she should lead the languishing army of the people to further effort, firing them with new purpose, and enabling them to conquer both their fears and their foes.

The summons to finer service came to Carey at his cobbler's bench, and to Livingstone at the loom. It led Washington from the sylvan seclusion of Mount Vernon, and Lincoln from his lawyer's office, that both might fill a larger place. One might almost apply the words of Christ's parable to such men: "Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things." But we cannot all leave the place of daily duty as these men. It is not always necessary that we should; in fact, it may be essential that we should not. If we rightly realise that it is meant to be not the place of servitude, but of sonship, then sublime possibilities leap to challenge the best that is in us. There, as perhaps in no other place, we may not only develop our powers and strengthen our spiritual life, but we may also wield an influence for good that is far-reaching. To be known for our sterling character, our fidelity, our scrupulous honour, is to glorify Him who has called us into discipleship. The inconsistent and unworthy follower has wrought immeasurable mischief. But it is equally true that the sincere, striving Christian man or woman is able to bear an irrefutable testimony to the grace of God. The former may condemn religion, but the latter commends it.

Nor is that all. There is a place for the gifts of the business man in Christ's service. Matthew, as we have pointed out, brought his ability as an organ-

iser and a systematic worker, to employ his powers in the highest way. It is true, as Dr. Alexander Whyte says, "When Matthew rose up and left all and followed our Lord, the only thing he took with him out of his old occupation was his pen and ink." The allusion is to the fact that subsequently Matthew wrote the Gospel which bears his name, recording something of the Master's work. But surely he also brought his ability to use that pen, and though no mention is made of his work, his part in organising the early groups of Christians would be invaluable.

Similar service is required by the Church to-day. Because a man cannot lead in prayer, or teach in the Sunday School, his gifts not lending themselves to this kind of work, there is no reason why he should remain inactive. There are sound reasons why he should be active. How vital the need is for capable, conscientious work on the business side of Church life is apparent to any who have given the matter thought. Church finance ought to be the forte of men who are accustomed to the demands of commerce, and without introducing the commercial spirit, the finances of religious work could be placed on a business footing. Instead of wearisome appeals for money, there is a better way. Instead of the minister, who ought to be God's prophet, having to dissipate his energies in raising funds, there should be a committee of capable business men who would relieve him of this, and who would see that due provision were made both for current expenses and for depreciation, as every business insists upon as necessary. Consequently, there would be increased efficiency in the work of the Church, with diminished friction and without so much of the unnecessary

wear and tear which militates against fullest success.

When men of Matthew's ability have given their service to the Church in this way, it has grown in influence and effectiveness. Consecrated accountancy and sanctified system are gifts that Christ can utilise. In this way, the minister has been enabled to give himself whole-heartedly to his task, which is fundamentally spiritual. Freed from the fret and harassments of finance, and liberated from the administrative side of his church, he has climbed the sunlit slopes where the Highest unveils His glory, and returning as Moses did to the assembled multitude, his face radiant with heavenly light and his voice vibrant with inspiration or comfort for the people committed to his care, he has rendered his greatest service to the world. Sir William Robertson Nicoll, the biographer of Dr. John Watson, quotes him as saying on one occasion, "Never can I forget what a distinguished scholar who used to sit in my church once said to me, 'Your best work in the pulpit has been to put heart into men for the coming week.' I wish I had put more. . . . I now clearly see every sentence should suggest Christ, and every sermon, even though His name had not been mentioned nor His words quoted, should leave the hearer at the feet of Christ."

How can this ideal be realised? First by that noble conception of the preacher's office which Dr. Stalker gives: "A congregation is a number of people associated for their moral and spiritual improvement, and they say to one of their number, 'Look, brother, we are busy with our daily toils and confused with domestic and worldly cares; we live in confusion and darkness; but we eagerly long for

peace and light to cheer and illuminate our life; and we have heard there is a land where these are to be found—a land of repose and joy, full of thoughts that breathe and words that burn: but we cannot go thither ourselves; we are too embroiled in daily cares: come, we will elect you and set you free from our toils, and you shall go thither for us, and week by week trade with that land and bring us its treasures and its spoils.'" The writer then goes on to say, "Woe to him if he does not week by week return laden, and ever more richly laden, and saying, 'Yes, brothers, I have been to that land; and it is a land of light and peace and nobleness: but I have never forgotten you and your needs and the dear bonds of brotherhood; and look, I have brought back this, and this, and this: take them to gladden and purify your life.'"

But if the moorings that hold the vessel to the administrative side of the work are never loosed, how can the minister make that voyage? If, however, he is liberated as we have suggested, his vessel not unduly laden with details of organisation, so that its capacity for bringing back a precious cargo can be used to the fullest extent, then we believe there will be a corresponding increase in the enrichment of life and the efficiency of his work. To this view of the ministry; we would add the necessity for an equally exalted conception of the function of the business man whose place in the ranks of the disciples was made plain by Christ when he called Matthew. This combination of the man of practical affairs and the man of prayer, of financial ability and fidelity to Christ's kingdom, will make for finer and more effective work in and through organised religion.

This distribution of effort will make for concentration on the main purpose which our Lord set before His followers, and the blessings of His sovereign rule will become more rapidly the possession of the race.

VIII

THOMAS, THE RATIONALIST

"Except I shall see . . . I will not believe."

—John 20:25.

"The evil that men do lives after them,
The good is oft interrèd with their bones."

OF no one is this truer than of Thomas, for while he is perhaps better known than some of the Twelve, he is known only for his faults. His most familiar designation is that of Thomas, the doubter. He demonstrates the fact that a bad name often haunts a man like his shadow. If we look for Thomas's failings, we shall find them, but there is a finer side to his character. He had qualities that made him worthy in Christ's eyes of a place in the Apostolate, and it is our aim to discover the distinctive contribution that Thomas made.

We find in the Synoptic Gospels, that he is simply one of the Twelve. He is a name and nothing more. Yet he must have been something of an enigma to the others who were so level-headed and matter-of-fact, and his proneness to ask questions and to seek explanations would not meet with much sympathy from one like Peter, for instance. If Mark's Gospel enshrines Peter's memories of the Master, we can understand why there is no mention of Thomas's spiritual difficulties, for the practical, im-

petuous Peter, who was more concerned with action than reflection, with deeds than debates, would look with little favour on a mind that wanted to know the rationale of everything. Though he must have been familiar with the incidents which followed the death of Christ, he evidently saw no reason why he should give prominence to such vain demands for proof of the resurrection before faith was possible.

Matthew may have omitted it for other reasons. Thomas and he are named together in the lists of Apostles, and it is possible that the two were friends. If that were so, that might be sufficient explanation for leaving unrecorded an incident that was painful in itself, and which might also cast some doubt on the reality of Christ's resurrection. Matthew knew that the questions raised had been satisfactorily answered because the Master was there to deal personally with them, but others might be bereft of faith, were unbelief on the part of an Apostle to be noised abroad. Moreover, one who had felt the wondrous condescension of Christ in calling a publican to be a disciple could not but be sensitive about anything that might cast an aspersion on His claims to be the risen Saviour of the race.

Luke, on the other hand, was a man of fine temper and generous judgments, and even granting that he had heard of the temporary paralysis of faith suffered by this disciple, as a medical man he could make allowance for him, considering the shock he had sustained. At any rate, it was a purely personal matter between Christ and Thomas, and whatever the mistake made, it had been finely atoned for in the end.

Why then should John put it on record? It cer-

tainly was not that he, the beloved disciple, was anxious to enhance his own reputation at the expense of another. It is rather that, being a man of intuition himself to whom the truth came by swift-winged couriers, he desired to show that there were others who, dominated by the intellectual, must seek truth in their own way. They needed explanations for the stupendous facts of faith, and Christ could satisfy the most exacting questioner providing he were sincere. Therefore the Fourth Gospel is the only one which tells how Thomas sought for a reasonable basis for belief, and how his doubts were dispersed by the radiance of the Light of the world.

When we look at the portrait of Thomas, we are inclined to regard him as rather

A Despondent Disciple.

There is a cause for every effect, although we may be unable to trace it. Suppose Thomas were a man who did not enjoy good health—and there is nothing improbable in the supposition considering "the heartache and the thousand natural shocks that flesh is heir to"—or suppose he were a man who had found life difficult and sometimes disappointing, would not that affect his whole outlook? If he had previously sustained some loss that left him stunned and shaken, we can readily understand the feelings that welled up in his soul when Christ was taken from His friends. But this is certain, Thomas was far removed from the bluff, hearty, buoyant fishermen in the Apostolic company. He was a thinker, quiet and reserved. Many a time, when the others were arguing about something the Master said, or were

comparing notes about the happenings of the day, he had gone out alone, with the silent stars for company, to ponder over what he had seen and heard. Emerson says: "Beware when the great God lets loose a thinker on this planet. Then all things are at risk as when a conflagration has broken out in a great city, and no man knows what is safe or where it will end."

Some lives are built of prosaic material. There is an element of greyness or even of gloom that cannot be eliminated. They boast no gorgeous mosaics or finely carved panelling, no richly storied windows nor stately architecture. They are but plain, unpretentious dwellings though they may house fine souls. Subdued, self-critical, depreciating even his good qualities, there would be a marked tendency to find a kindred spirit, and we therefore suggest that Matthew, because he had good grounds for humility and restraint in that he had for so long been a member of a despised class, would be the most intimate friend Thomas had among the disciples.

That Thomas was a man of moods goes without saying. Though we may not expect to find him often ecstatic, there were times when he felt the exhilaration of being with Christ. It was impossible to live in fellowship with such a Master, to see the beauty of that life, and to hear the matchless wisdom that fell from those lips without being impelled to essay the heights on which he lived, and without breathing the invigorating air of those altitudes. But on the other hand, there was always the danger of reaction, and if, as we have suggested, Thomas had met with adversity or had suffered from "the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune," there would be

times when he would doubt his worthiness, and would accuse himself of basest hypocrisy in remaining among the Saviour's friends. One day he might feel that he could face the world alone. The next day, he could not face his own unworthy self, but would almost start at his own shadow. Yet he had known exaltation of spirit. Although we have no information about the event, there came that call which took him from the routine of daily toil, and made him one of the Twelve. It was both challenging and convincing—challenging, for he had felt he must obey; convincing, for he had been assured that it was right to leave all and follow Christ.

He had fluctuated between certainty and uncertainty, and possibly had been the object of a good deal of criticism from his fellow disciples, but there is at least one instance of this doubter being a man of daring, and though it may be little to go on, at the same time it reveals Thomas in an unsuspected light. When word came to our Lord that His friend Lazarus was dying, Christ intimated His intention to go to Bethany. There was something sinister in the very word. Dull-witted though the disciples had sometimes proved, they were sufficiently in touch with public opinion to know that their Master had grown very unpopular with the religious leaders, and it is possible to read between the lines and to note the evident consternation His decision evoked. But one voice spoke clearly among the confused counsels of that moment. It said, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him," and the disciples could not have been more surprised than we to note that it was Thomas who thus urged the chivalrous and courageous course.

There was, then, a fine side to this sometimes despondent character. He must have been a man of deep convictions thus to suggest taking his stand beside Christ in the possible dangers that a return to the neighbourhood of Jerusalem entailed, for this is the courage not of the hot-headed and impetuous, but of reasoned allegiance to the highest. But if that be so, it is surely the more puzzling to find him later so hard to convince regarding the resurrection of the Lord, and so obstinate in his demands that he must put his finger into the print of the nails, and thrust his hand into the wounded side. Why was he so unbelieving? His apparent unbelief is proof of what faith in Christ had meant to him. His following had not been lightly undertaken. He had felt his soul swayed by that call, and having first satisfied himself that this was indeed the long-awaited One, he had abandoned all to that quest. For a time, though doubts had presented themselves to his mind, he had been able to triumph over them and to justify the sacrifices he had made. But when the blow fell, when he saw his Master led away by the armed band and handed over to the foes whom He had previously worsted in every encounter, when he saw that poor mangled body taken down from the cross and laid in a tomb to which charity had made Him debtor, the fabric of faith which Thomas had been slowly rearing toppled to the earth, and he felt himself to be utterly bereft.

"Some doubt who desire to believe," says Dr. Bruce. "Nay, their doubt is due to their excessive anxiety to believe. They are so eager to know the very truth, and feel so keenly the immense importance of the interests at stake, that they cannot take

things for granted, and for a time their hand so trembles that they cannot seize firm hold of the great objects of faith—a living God; an incarnate, crucified, risen Saviour; a glorious, eternal future. Theirs is the doubt peculiar to earnest, thoughtful, pure-hearted men, wide as the poles asunder from the doubt of the frivolous, the worldly, the vicious: a holy, noble doubt, not a base and unholy; if not to be praised as positively meritorious, still less to be harshly condemned and excluded from the pale of Christian sympathy—a doubt which at worst is but an infirmity, and which ever ends in strong, unwavering faith."

It was as though the sun had been blotted out from the midday sky. Every one who has wandered amid the mountains knows just what this means. The day has been bright as you set out. You crossed the river and passed through the village that nestled at the foot of the range, promising yourself that when once the peak was gained, a fine view would repay you for the effort. Half way up, it may be that you stopped to regain breath, and looked back over the track. There in the distance was a band of silver ribbon: that was the river. The white dots in the field were the cattle you passed. The wisp of smoke showed where the cottages were as you passed along the quaint, cobbled street. But even as you looked, a bank of cloud overspread the face of the sun. A chill swept the mountain. And ere long the mists came down, swathing you about with a gauzy veil that left you guessing both distances and direction. Sight does not take us all the way through life, no matter how sagacious we may be. Faith is indispensable. Everything had gone—

conviction, courage, Christ. To regard Thomas as a man who indulged doubts merely for the pleasant sensation of being different from others, or posing as an intellectual, is to misjudge him grossly. He might have asked:

> "Where is the blessedness I knew
> When first I saw the Lord?
> Where is the soul-refreshing view
> Of Jesus and His word?"

Thomas had succumbed to the force of cruel circumstances, and we cannot be surprised if he were hard to convince when the rest tried to reassure him. Still he was more than a despondent disciple, for he was

A Determined Discoverer of the Truth.

Shakespeare has finely said:

> "Our doubts are traitors
> And make us lose the good we oft might win
> By fearing to attempt."

But he had not abandoned the attempt altogether. He was so stunned by the events of those days that he could not take in the story with which his friends sought to comfort him. He had heard of the resurrection of the Lord, but on their own admission, the news the women brought had been regarded by the disciples as idle tales. He had probably wandered away, far from the city with its bustle and noise, plying its trade as though nothing had happened, just as though a common malefactor and de-

ceiver of the people had met with his just reward. But the sorrowful heart of Thomas had passed beyond the stage when it could feel resentment. All he knew was that he had found One who had spoken to the soul within him as no other man had ever done. He had felt his being pulsating with new life as he shared such companionship, and now, aspiration lay dead. He cared nothing for the curious gaze of some who may have recognized him as a follower of the Nazarene; if there were any danger, he was past caring. He roamed the quiet hills, and sat disconsolate in some of the rocky ravines, returning only when he could endure the solitude no longer. And to be greeted with the news that the Lord had actually visited His friends, and had spoken to them words of encouragement and cheer, was more than the anguished heart could stand. Had he not been fighting the battle alone all through the day? Had he not turned those cryptic sayings over and over in his mind, recalling that last conversation in the Upper Room? The Saviour had said that He was going away to prepare a place for them. That was unusual enough, for when the occasion had arisen before, He had sent two of the disciples to prepare that very place in which the Passover had been eaten. The remainder of the band had not apparently seen anything remarkable in this, but Jesus had also said, "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go, ye know, and the way ye know." It was then that Thomas had broken the silence. "Lord, we know not whither Thou goest; and how can we know the way?" The answer was more

puzzling still to the thoughtful mind. "I am the way, the truth and the life."

Doubter! Unbeliever! Sceptic! If only those who hurl these epithets at the unconvinced could sometimes understand the agony through which a soul which would fain believe and cannot must pass, they would be more charitable. William Penn, himself a great believer, must have known at some period of his Christian experience the need for such sympathy, for he says: "The greatest understandings doubt most, are readiest to learn, and least pleased with themselves. For though they stand on higher ground, and so see farther than their neighbours, they are yet humbled by their prospect, since it shows them something so much higher and above their reach."

When therefore Thomas was greeted with the words, "We have seen the Lord," he felt that he must know before he could accept their glib statement. "Seeing is believing!" He had to be convinced before he could take their word for it. It was not that he wanted to excuse his incredulity, nor justify his scepticism. Faith was far too vital a matter to be treated lightly or to be excluded if it were possible to believe. Perhaps he blamed himself that he had believed too readily before. At any rate, he would have proofs now ere he gave credence to the astonishing intelligence that the Lord had risen. "Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe." In vain they tried to reason with him. Was it not his own fault that he had been absent when the Saviour came? If he had not been

so moody and sceptical, he would have found proof for the facts they submitted to him. It is easy thus to apportion blame till we remember that Thomas was more eager to believe than he was to doubt, but till the darkness could be dispelled from his sorrowful eyes, faith was impossible.

It has been pointed out by a profound thinker that Thomas's inability to accept the disciples' testimony "did not proceed from *unwillingness* to believe. It was the doubt of a sad man, whose sadness was due to this, that the event whereof he doubted was one of which he would most gladly be assured. Nothing could give Thomas greater delight than to be certified that his Master was indeed risen. This is evident from the joy he manifested when he was at length satisfied. 'My Lord and My God!' that is not the exclamation of one who is forced reluctantly to admit a fact he would rather deny. It is common for men who never had any doubts themselves to trace all doubt to bad motives, and denounce it indiscriminately as a crime."

There is a poignant passage in the life of Professor Huxley. He had been appointed to one of the Royal Commissions, and during their enquiries, Huxley found himself with some of the other members of the Commission spending Sunday in a small country town. "I suppose you are going to church," he said to one of them. "What if you stayed at home instead and talked to me about your religion?" "No," replied the other, "I am not clever enough to answer your arguments." "But what if you simply told me of your own experience, of what religion has done for you?" The man assented, and through the whole morning he talked of what he

had seen and known of Christ's power in his own life. Presently Huxley said, with tears welling unbidden to his eyes, "I would give my right hand if I could believe that!" "If I could believe that . . ." Then there was the "will to believe" in that soul, just as it was there in the heart of Thomas. Perhaps neither of them was as fortunate as Tennyson's friend, Arthur Henry Hallam, of whom he wrote:

> "He fought his doubts and gather'd strength,
> He would not make his judgment blind,
> He faced the spectres of the mind
> And laid them: thus he came at length
> To find a stronger faith his own;
> And Power was with him in the night,
> Which makes the darkness and the light,
> And dwells not in the light alone."

Though the arguments of the Apostles were as futile as their reproaches, Thomas had not abandoned his search for truth. The light had not come, but he felt that it would surely be his if this were not simply a story born in minds deranged by a great sorrow. But he must come to the truth in his own way. He must continue his perilous path through the cavernous depths of scepticism till at last he found the daylight glimmering through the exit of his prison cave, and perhaps for one of his temperament, who must have reasons for the faith that is in him, it was the only way. He was still the determined discoverer of truth for himself, and because that was so, he came to that point where, if he had not discovered the light, the light discovered him. Then he became

A Devoted Disciple.

Eight days had elapsed. It was a period of Purgatory for him. Thomas was still unconvinced, but at least he had become more tolerant of the company of his friends, for that evening, when Jesus came again, he was there with the rest. The word of greeting spoken to the company, our Lord turned to Thomas and said: "Reach hither thy finger, and behold My hands, and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into My side, and be not faithless but believing."

Christ takes a man at his word, and is willing to satisfy the honest enquirer even though the questions asked might appear unnecessary. We can understand the Master's attitude. Just as He had told of the shepherd who could not be content with the sheep safe in the fold, but must needs go out into the night in search of the lost, so Jesus desired the restoration of this soul tortured by doubt. What was the effect on Thomas? He did not avail himself of the opportunity thus afforded him of settling the matter. It was only then that he realised that his rationalism was irrational. His quest had been really not for facts but for faith, not for the truth about Christ, but for Christ Himself. With those sympathetic eyes upon him, with those hands outstretched, bearing the prints of the cruel nails, Thomas felt all his questions were answered. He was convinced and prepared to doubt no more. The bonds that held him fast were severed. The darkness of his prison-house gave place to the light and gladness of emancipation. With quivering lips and swimming eyes, he looked into the face of that

Christ whom he had loved even in the hour of his desolate doubt, and exclaimed, "My Lord and my God!"

We recall a day when, tramping through the rugged hills of Wales, the sun was hidden, and the mists lay thick in the valleys below. It was early in the morning, and it almost appeared as though the shroud in which the previous day had died still lay on the land. But by and by, there were strange stirrings in the valley as the sun kissed it with his warm lips, and smiled benignantly on the dreary landscape. The mists swayed and curled a little as though in contemptuous indifference, but they parted grudgingly here and there, till they vanished like a dream at the opening day. Soon the valley, the hill on which we stood, with the mountain range beyond, shone clear in the golden light. The day had indeed come, and the scenes which had been veiled from our eyes by that vaporous curtain lay in softened splendour before us. So it was with the darkened soul of Thomas when the Sun of Righteousness flooded his life. He had passed through an unforgettable experience, but his quest was rewarded. What was hidden from him before now stood out in bold outline, for he had found the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

It is interesting to note that nothing he had heard about Christ from the lips of his fellow disciples had led him to this great conviction in which he rejoiced. It was contact with Christ Himself which had dispelled his doubts and delivered him from the torture of his scepticism. Herein is a truth of vital importance. Strong, warm-hearted discipleship can come only from personal experience of what Christ

is and can be to the human soul. The Samaritan woman declared to her incredulous neighbors that she had found one who could read the unpublished records of her past, but while they came to Jesus simply out of curiosity, they went away with conviction. "Now we believe, not because of thy sayings; for we have heard Him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world." The history of great leaders reveals the fact that their power to command allegiance has depended on personal touch with their followers. Luther would not have received the support of his fellow-countrymen to the extent he did had it not been for their intimate knowledge of the man, and his sincerity of aim and strength of purpose. Savonarola, Wilberforce and Wesley can be instanced in support of the same thing. The disciples had told Thomas what they had seen and experienced, but without much effect. The light of their testimony was too feeble to penetrate the opaque clouds that shrouded his soul, but when once he came into fellowship with the Lord Himself, everything was changed. He had found deliverance from the terrible weight that had crushed him down and made progress and peace impossible.

The same thing is constantly happening. We need in these days to depend less upon the word of others and more on the fact of personal experience of Christ as the Saviour and Lord of life, and we urge that without in any sense diminishing the value of either the written or spoken witness of those who have tasted and seen that the Lord is gracious. On the contrary, it is their own personal knowledge of Christ which renders their testimony of the utmost

importance, but that only enhances the value of contact with Christ as the means to a virile and valorous faith. For at best, only a part of the soul's experience can be transmitted to others. Bernard of Clairvaux might have been expressing the feelings of Thomas when he sings:

"Oh, hope of every contrite heart,
Oh, joy of all the meek,
To those who fall, how kind Thou art;
How good to those who seek!

"But what to those who find? Ah, this
Nor tongue nor pen can show:
The love of Jesus, what it is
None but His loved ones know."

The cry that burst from Thomas, "My Lord and my God!" was from a surcharged heart, which like a mill-stream long pent in turgid inactivity behind the dam, suddenly finds the sluice gates open. Leaping joyously on its way, it finds not only freedom, but also the satisfaction of service, and the wheels of being begin to revolve once more. What followed this interview in which his doubts were dispersed, we are not told, but it is easy to believe that from that hour, Thomas would be a tower of strength to the Apostolate and to the Church. He had come to his faith only after mental suffering and at great cost, and that which costs much is often worth much. Some had never been tortured with questionings as he, but that rather than weakening his position, would give him added power when it came to dealing with the enquirers that in subsequent days sought eagerly to know the reasons for the new faith. He

could understand their perplexities, and with a deep patience born of sympathy, he would be able to lead the hesitant and the halting along the paths that issue in light.

But there is still another fact to be taken into account. While his own difficulties had been removed by this personal interview with Christ, our Lord spoke a word to the others that was surely meant for the great company of would-be disciples in every generation. "Thomas, because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." A reasonable religion is desired by all men, but it must never be forgotten that there is always the need for faith, and that while "seeing is believing" in the philosophy of Thomas, it is the not-seeing that is the strongest form of belief. Nor is that putting any premium on credulity. It is simply the recognition of spiritual facts as spiritual. We are finite at best. While it is perfectly true that we must use the powers of mind that God has given to us, it is equally true that those faculties may be inadequate when it comes to discerning fully the great facts of faith. On a clear starlit night, the naked eye can see at most only about seven thousand stars, but with his mammoth telescope, the skilled astronomer can count twenty millions. Are we then to dispute his findings, simply because our unaided powers cannot see what he sees? On the contrary, we have to admit that it is only that our sight is inadequate. So the finite may not grasp the infinite, and our mortal powers of reason may fail wholly to understand the mysteries of the resurrection. It is impossible to reduce some things to an exact formula, or to demonstrate them

in black and white. Who can explain fully or describe in definite terms a mother's love, the influence of one soul upon another, or the effect of a June evening, sweet with the songs of birds and heavy with the fragrance of a thousand roses? How then can it be thought possible to do it with Christian experience? While there are certain definite facts that can be related and explained, there are other elements in the believer's contact with Christ that are vital, and yet which are beyond the power of reason to express or explain. Then the rational mind must remain unsatisfied, wandering in tortuous ways of doubt without hope of light? Nothing of the kind. Where reason alone cannot pass, faith may press on. It is as though the soul had toiled up steep ways till it reached a glittering peak only to find that a great yawning ravine lay between it and the farthest point of its goal. It had used the staff of knowledge, and up to that hour had found it invaluable though now it was useless. But it spreads the wings of faith which before had not been called into play, and where reason with its slow-toiling feet failed, faith's powerful pinions bear it far across the intervening barriers on toward the goal of peace and life.

G. F. Watts, in his memorable picture, "Faith," puts it another way. Faith is shown not as the conventional type of anæmic eclecticism, nor of reflective piety, but a figure arrayed in the classical robes of humanity. The feet are bleeding with long journeyings, for she had walked by faith, and not by sight. She holds her sword across her knees as she laves her feet in a wayside stream, washing from them the stains and blood of the way, and as she lifts her eyes from the seen to the unseen, she takes new

heart and courage for the battle of life, "enduring as seeing Him who is invisible." "Blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed," says Christ to the modern man. Reason is good up to a point, but when the physical powers suffer diminution or the eyes grow dim with the tears of trial, the soul may yet remain strong in faith, unmoved by the storms of adversity and the buffeting seas of life, like the Eddystone lighthouse, founded on a rock and sending forth its radiant beam to guide other souls on the course that leads to the haven—the blacker the skies the brighter its light.

Christ seeks to satisfy the intellect as well as the heart, but the fullest solutions of life's problems are found not in argument or reasonings, but in personal faith in the Lord Himself. We remember being urged by some friends in Paris to visit without fail one of the most wonderful places in the capital, the Sainte Chapelle. We made our way to the church, with the glowing descriptions to which we had listened regarding its architecture and its unparalleled windows awakening keenest expectations, but at first we were doomed to disappointment. It was truly a fine piece of architecture, but it was much smaller than we had been led to expect, and instead of rapturously describing it as a poem in stone, as our friends had done, we were more inclined to call it a couplet. From the street the windows looked flat and colourless, and we entered with a resolve never again to be led away by the exuberant praise of the mere sight-seer. But when we entered it was impossible to describe the beauty of the scene. The morning sun shone with subdued splendour through the ancient glass, illumining each detail of face and

symbol till a feeling of awe overspread the heart. The colours were softly reflected by the marble and mosaics of the floor, and a sense of wonder left us almost unconscious of time or place. Truly, the eloquent description that had led us there gave only a hint of the majesty and glory of that little sanctuary. Yet from without we had looked on it unmoved! That was the whole explanation. The beauty of the place could not be seen until we went inside.

It is not too much to say that that was akin to Thomas's experience. Only in that hour when he entered into intimate fellowship with Christ did he realise that this was indeed both his Lord and his God; and only then did he apprehend the satisfying power of Christ. It is true of multitudes of others who have regarded Christ from afar, or have been content to try to understand Him and to gauge His power to bless the soul only from without. But once they have entered by faith into personal fellowship with Him, they have begun to see with other eyes the beauty of His character, the superb splendour of His life, and the sweetness of His redemptive love. Even though that experience may be theirs, it does not mean that they have sounded the depths of that mighty heart or scaled the altitudes on which the Son of God moved, any more than a brief visit to Sainte Chapelle can exhaust its beauties. But it does mean that as faith grows in power, so the knowledge of spiritual things will increase, and though an answer may not be found for all our questions, the soul becomes more ready to wait till the time of unveiling shall give clear vision,

and when no longer we shall see in a mirror darkly but face to face.

Thomas found a reasonable faith that stood him in good stead through life simply because he came into personal contact with Christ. We too shall find the same thing, faith taking the place of unaided reason, and by bridging the centuries make that contact as real as that which the Upper Room made possible with the Living Lord.

In those lines which have been of help to multitudes, Principal Shairp has summed the matter up for us:

"I have a life in Christ to live,
I have a death in Christ to die;
And must I wait till Science give
All doubts a full reply?

"Nay, rather, while the sea of doubt
Is raging wildly round about,
Questioning of life, and death, and sin,
Let me but creep within
Thy fold, O Christ, and at Thy feet
Take but the lowest seat,
And hear Thine awful voice repeat,
In gentlest accents, heavenly sweet;
'Come unto Me and rest;
Believe Me and be blest.'"

IX

SIMON, THE ENTHUSIAST

"Simon the Canaanite."—MARK 3 : 18.
"Simon Zelotes."—ACTS 1 : 13.

WE all love an enthusiast. His flaming passion for the object he holds dear, his unquenchable courage, and his fiery devotion, make him an object of admiring interest, and it were surprising indeed if there were no such ardent soul included in the Twelve. Yet Simon is one of the least known of the band. We have only the two names by which he is mentioned in the lists of the Evangelists to give us any indication of the man himself. When Shakespeare puts the question, "What's in a name?" we know perfectly well that his purpose is to prove how unimportant the name itself may be. If it were but the label attached to a gorgeous, fragrant rose, it were unnecessary, for the rose makes its own claim to our notice by the sweetness and symmetry of its life. The name in that case does not matter. But when we have nothing more than the name of this Apostle as the basis of our study, it is necessary that we should bestow the fullest attention on it.

Simon is spoken of only four times in the New Testament, and not one incident is coupled with his name, nor a single deed attributed to him. The two designations given to him, reveal him as a man of enthusiasm for reform, and they are worthy of no-

tice. He is described twice as the "Canaanite." Dr. Bruce has an interesting note on this. "He is called the Kananite (not Canaanite) which is a political, not a geographical designation as appears from the Greek word substituted in place of this Hebrew one by Luke, who calls the disciple we now speak of Simon Zelotes. . . . This epithet Zelotes connects Simon unmistakably with the famous party which rose in rebellion under Judas in the days of the taxing, some twenty years before Christ's ministry began, when Judæa and Samaria were brought under the direct government of Rome, and a census of the population was taken with a view to subsequent taxation." Simon the Zealot was therefore a man with a record, for his passionate patriotism had brought with it considerable danger. The reform movement headed by Judas of Gamala, to which Gamaliel refers in his eloquent speech before the Sanhedrin (Acts 5 : 34) after the Day of Pentecost, was suppressed by the ruthless hand of Rome. Its leader was executed, and its supporters were either killed or dispersed. But the fire was not stamped out. It still smouldered unobserved, ready to burst forth with renewed fury when some favourable breeze should fan its embers, and though the attempt to hasten the establishment of the Messianic kingdom had proved futile, there were some valorous souls who were only waiting for an opportunity to strike another blow for freedom.

This was the type of man who found a place in the ranks of the Apostles. How he came to choose the meek and lowly Jesus in the place of the fiery, uncontrollable Judas remains a mystery, and yet one not wholly without explanation. Allowing for the

inevitable depression and reaction which would fall on such a vehement nature after the overthrow of his leader, Simon was too much of an enthusiast not to be on the alert for some like-minded soul who might become the rallying point for a new crusade against the hated invader and all his works.

An Idealist

such as Simon might prove a very practical force, and being a man of strong convictions and powerful influence, it is possible that he felt keenly the necessity for bringing together the scattered forces of patriotism, and by careful organisation and secret propaganda, securing the success that had been snatched from them before. At least, he had enthusiasms that could not be quenched by reverses. The goal was too glorious. Though the sacrifice might be costly, the end was supreme. It was an idealist's dream of a kingdom in which the purpose of God might be realised, and in which the Divine should be dominant. This aim was never far removed from the heart of the devout Israelite. In fact, it is difficult to see how it could ever be forgotten. God had called the people of Israel to share in blessings that marked them off from the rest of the human family up to that time. They were to be the medium of His mercy, the custodians of His revealed will for the race, and were to hand on to mankind a great and glorious heritage. He had given to them not only kings like David the daring, and Solomon the splendid, but also a definite promise that another should be raised up of the royal line and of the increase of His government and peace

there should be no end. Simon had often conned the prophecies, for the mighty men of the past have been those well-versed in the promises of God, but as he looked at things as they ought to be, and at things as they were, he could not have been easy in his mind. Instead of peace there was turbulence; instead of contentment and prosperity, there was continual chafing under the yoke of an alien power; instead of justice and righteousness, there were petty injustices and cruel tyranny that made day hideous with its tales of extortion and night sleepless with desires that clamoured for fulfilment.

"With judgment and with righteousness" was the promised kingdom to be established, and what were the facts? Where was the ancient glory of the Davidic rule? It had departed like that of many another nation reared on a far less stable foundation. Over their national life it seemed as though an unseen hand had written "Ichabod"—the glory is departed. Were the promises of God then without effect, and His plain decrees abrogated? It was unthinkable, and yet stern reality asserted itself. The majority of the Zealots may have been more patriotic than religious, but even those who were alienated from forms of religion by the shallowness and inconsistency of the professedly pious could not be indifferent to the steady decline of religion and its consequent reaction on the life of the people. The race seemed to be to the swift and the battle to the strong. The old principles of right were displaced by those of might. The poor were openly robbed. Widows were despoiled of their possessions without redress. The hireling was oppressed in his wages, sundry deductions being made without war-

rant, or the bargain repudiated without any chance of bringing the fraudulent to book. Corruption was rife in civic affairs, and even the taxation imposed by the government was made the means of extortion. The worst of it was, as we have seen in our study of Matthew, certain renegade Jews had sold themselves into the power of the oppressor, and their petty tyranny was more aggravating because of their open defection from the ranks of the people.

This made the hearts of men like Simon as tinder before the sparks flung off from the vehement soul of Judas of Gamala, and though the leader had fallen, the flag must still be upheld until deliverance came. It was the sight of the corrupt upper classes and the crushed lower classes that kept even the scattered members of the movement true to their cause, and in the soul of Simon, to quote Professor Seeley, flamed that passionate devotion which was kindled by love—"The love not of the race nor of the individual, but of the race in the individual . . . the love not of all men, nor yet of every man, but of *the man* in every man."

How were these ends to be achieved, these wrongs to be righted? To his honour be it said, Simon was not like Hamlet who in his well-known lament says:

> "The time is out of joint: O cursèd spite,
> That ever I was born to set it right!"

Nor did he abandon himself to the seemingly inevitable. The fact that some ceased to care, that some were disheartened by the opposition of Rome, made ease a detestable and shameful course. They had fallen victims to circumstance, as Cowper finely says:

"Lamented change! to which full many a cause
Inveterate, hopeless of a cure, conspires.
The course of human things from good to ill,
From ill to worse, is fatal, never fails.
Increase of power begets increase of wealth;
Wealth luxury, and luxury excess;
Excess, the scrofulous and itchy plague,
That seizes first the opulent, descends
To the next rank contagious, and in time
Taints downward all the graduated scale
Of order from the chariot to the plough."

So this kindled soul, knowing no peace and offering no quarter to traitorous thoughts, would turn again to those promises by which he had previously fed the flame of patriotism, and reading that "the zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this," recalled the fact that power must have an adequate instrument for its transmission, and that God works through responsive and obedient souls. He vowed anew to strive for a better order, and dedicated himself with all the zeal of his passionate nature to be willing in the day of God's power. But reforms need a reformer. These great ends of freedom and justice could be secured only as there was a leader who combined both vision and valour. Where was this man to be found?

An Idealist With an Ideal

We picture the Zealot mingling with the crowd which had gathered to hear this new Teacher who had arisen. The courage of His outspoken attacks on the privileged classes had been the one topic of conversation in the bazaars where the leisured com-

merce of those days allowed ample opportunity for gossip. It had been talked about in the fœtid hovels where men, whose hearts were hot with hate born of their wrongs, spoke in an undertone, and Simon, this lover of liberty, this champion of the common people, had resolved to take the first chance of hearing the great Reformer for himself. He had, however, to be cautious. He was known to the authorities, who would not need much inducement to secure his arrest were he found to be engaged in any attempt to stir up revolt. So with his face partly screened by his robe, he stands in the throng listening to Jesus, the carpenter.

Verily, here was a Man after his own heart. Not content with denouncing the iniquities of society, this Teacher had a constructive policy. What was He saying? A new kingdom was to be established, —the Kingdom of Heaven, in which righteousness should flourish, and the labouring and heavy-laden find rest! The Israel of God was no longer to be trodden under the heel of the callous oppressor, but all should be blessed under the sovereign rule of the Supreme! The words fell on his arid soul like dew. This was the embodiment of the highest dreams of prophet and seer through the centuries, and here stood not only an Idealist, who with master-hand could paint in glowing colours the future of the race, but who evidently possessed the power to enable men to see and feel things as they appeared to Him. Darkness had fallen, the stars were spangling the sky with their myriad points of light, when the Master finished His discourse and the crowd slowly dispersed. But light was beginning to break in Simon's soul. Every star on his homeward way

seemed a symbol of re-kindled hope. If this Teacher were in earnest about such reforms, there was a new chance for "the cause." Simon knew a score of zealous hearts to whom he had but to carry the news and a movement would start which, like a mountain torrent, gathering in both force and fury as it sped on its way, would carry all before it. Freedom was in sight! But there must be no mistake this time. They must lay their plans cautiously for spies were everywhere, and another premature attempt to overturn the tyrant's throne would be disastrous. Perhaps before telling his associates, it would be better to put a few careful questions to Jesus Himself, reasoned the Zealot, and with that object in view, he sought the Nazarene. Simon again took his place in the crowd till the teaching was finished, and it might be possible to speak to Jesus unobserved. But he did not mind the delay. On the contrary, it gave him further opportunity to study this strange personality. This Man seemed endowed with powers that Simon had never seen before. It was not only that He manifestly possessed ability to work physical cures, but He also exercised an influence over the soul. Simon remembered the flashing eyes of Judas of Gamala, and the denunciations that poured like fiery lava from his lips till the hearts of his hearers in turn grew hot. But there was something altogether different about this Nazarene. His words were charged with divine meaning. While He admitted the evils of the world without, He pointed also to the evil within, and it was to Simon as though he were following this Teacher along subterranean passages, where the darkness was illumined by the torch of Truth, and

where loathsome things peered out at him from the recesses of his own life. Then Christ seemed to lead the way to some mount on which the sun shone in golden glory, flooding the landscape with its amber light, and revealing beauty before hidden from human eyes. Life might be a nobler, a more heroic thing than he had ever dreamed. He might indeed help the world to a realisation of those blessings which would spring up like the fresh vegetation which reclothes the plain when the forest fire has gone. This would be life indeed!

The Saviour's words fanned the embers in the patriot's soul. The altar once erected there, but long forsaken, now glowed again with holy fire. And in the interview which followed, the Zealot made his choice. A new leader had been raised up by Jehovah, and what was more, He was an idealist whose concept of a kingdom was grander than any Simon had ever conceived. He felt it was only a matter of time and the shackles would be broken. The enslaved would march on their tormentors with quenchless love of liberty and with deathless ardour. His heart seemed to sing with joyous hope:

> "Man's clouded sun shall brightly rise,
> And songs ascend instead of sighs.
> God save the people!"

Simon probably thought he had chosen Jesus as his new leader. The reverse was the truth: Jesus had chosen him as follower. But however the relationship began, the bond had been forged. Tennyson describes the commission which Sir Galahad received to seek the Holy Grail, and as the maiden girded the young knight for his quest, she said:

" 'Go forth, for thou shalt see what I have seen,
And break thro' all, till one will crown thee king
Far in the spiritual city': and as she spake
She sent the deathless passion in her eyes
Thro' him, and made him hers, and laid her mind
On him, and he believed in her belief."

Simon's experience was akin. He might not have expressed it thus, but Christ sent the deathless passion that glowed with unquenchable light in those divine eyes through him, and claimed his loyal service. His heart felt the spell of Christ's love. Alert, ready for any service, he was now on the watch continually for opportunities of gaining further adherents to the Master's cause, and with passionate zeal he spent himself in a thousand ways.

Such a Master called forth the best for He was worthy of the best. And surely, in those days of calculated devotion to God, of piety that was measured minutely so that the Law's requirements were met and no more, it must have been both refreshing and inspiriting for Christ to have such an enthusiastic soul with Him. True, the Zealot would need a firm hand, for his anxiety to usher in the day of liberty might jeopardise the future of the kingdom. His was zeal but not according to knowledge. He might precipitate a crisis that would have fatal results, but if the choice must be between the extremist and the lukewarm, the later words of Christ to the Laodicean Church would indicate which were the better lot. Professor Seeley has put this in memorable words: "No heart is pure that is not passionate. No virtue is safe that is not enthusiastic."

The months which followed saw great development in Simon. Christ had found a man whose

powers were running to waste like some torrential cataract full of sound and fury. He took those powers—the noble aims, the eager discontent, the passionate resolves—and just as the mighty forces of Niagara, which for centuries were simply a magnificent spectacle but nothing more have been turned to account, generating light, heat and power for the service of man, so our Lord harnessed the zeal of this disciple for the great work of the Kingdom. The whole fellowship would feel the impact of such a life. He would be a constant challenge, urging deeper devotion and firmer following of such a Leader. He would be a spur in the side of self-complacency and none of the others could look on this eager face with its deep-set gleaming eyes and sensitive mouth without feeling the force of the life within. Simon would himself be growingly conscious of the change Christ had made in him, as life became charged with new possibilities of usefulness and power. Like his fellow-apostles, he would sometimes be mystified by Christ's apparent indifference to the chances of the hour, and his heart would chafe at the slow progress and the unwarranted delay in striking the blow for supremacy. He had yet to learn the meaning of the Master's mission, and the truth that underlay the sacred words: "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways." But love is the key to the deeper loyalties, and as his acquaintance with Christ ripened, his power to trust Him increased. Once or twice, that trust was put to severe tests. For example, when the crowd determined to make Christ king by force, Simon's hopes leapt high. He may have disliked the term "king," suspecting that the

movement might take a wrong direction and one yoke simply be substituted for another. Yet it was something to know that an active course had begun, and who could tell where it might end! But ere the crowd could achieve the desired aim, Christ disappeared, and the chance was lost. Again, the Zealot's breast swelled with anticipations of triumph when the Master rode into Jerusalem in the manifest rôle of the Messiah. It was heartening to hear the welcome shouts, and to see the garments strewing His way as for a kingly conqueror. It was thrilling to note His rebuke to the querulous critics who objected to the popular outburst, and to see the chattering money-changers—dishonest rogues as they were to a man—snatch at the coins which ran from the overturned tables, and then retreat shamefacedly before that righteous gaze. But it was disappointing indeed to find that Christ would not follow up the advantage. He was unwilling to take the reins of office when they were thrust into His hands. He would not take possession of Herod's throne though a thousand arms were ready to storm the guard and make Him king. On the contrary, the Master firmly insisted on returning to Bethany, flinging His chances to the winds. It was not strategy. It was unjust both to Himself and to the cause. Of course, Simon knew that possibly his Leader could not entrust His plans to them at that juncture, but there was an alternative explanation of His actions. Could it be that He had no definite plans at all? Simon sickened at the thought. If He had, why did He not press His claims when the city lay at His feet? Why did He later suggest withdrawing to that secluded Upper Room, and why secretly

inform His friends that He was going to leave them? Unless, perhaps He intended to strike a blow for supremacy from some unexpected quarter, and wanted them to remain in the capital to divert attention from Himself? For a moment that seemed a probable idea. But the Lord went on to speak of being betrayed, of dying at the hands of His foes, and Simon's soul sank. "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick," and noble resolves frustrated time after time tend to misery and madness. Later, when calamity followed calamity, as it did in swift succession, it is little wonder if this man who had been sorely disappointed before by Judas's overthrow, now found himself flung from those sunkissed hills, where hopes tower high above mist and cloud, down to the depths of depression too awful for words. Christ was dead, murdered by His enemies and with Him hope died too. It must have appeared to Simon that there was no justice on earth and no pity in the heavens. Man's best efforts to right the wrong and free the fettered were only mocked by the supreme powers, and the outlook was dark indeed.

We lose sight of Simon in the gloom of those grief-laden days. He had scattered with the rest when safety seemed to demand it, but he was unable to escape the torturing regrets that filled his mind. He felt, as Lowell puts it:

"Careless seems the great Avenger; history's pages but record
One death-grapple in the darkness 'twixt old systems and the Word;
Truth for ever on the scaffold, Wrong for ever on the throne."

Far away from Jerusalem's turbulent streets, this dejected and once ardent soul would cry out in bitterness of heart, even as Elijah had done under similar stress, for the narcotic draught of death's cup. All was in vain; happier were those who could bow to the inevitable rather than seek deliverance and reform for the race.

When Christian found himself in the House of the Interpreter, as Bunyan relates, he saw a strange sight. There was a fire burning by a wall, and although a man stood by it, constantly throwing water on the flames, they leapt higher and higher. Christian could not understand why the water proved so ineffectual until his guide showed him another man standing on the other side of the wall, perpetually feeding the fire with oil. Thus it burned with increasing strength. It was so with the fires of enthusiasm in the Zealot's soul. Although for a time they were damped down and almost extinguished, the oil of Divine grace was secretly poured upon them, till they leapt up with more than former brightness. The days passed, bringing the glad intelligence that the Lord lived. The disciples saw the loved face again. They heard the voice they thought was silenced for ever. And with Christ's commission ringing in their ears, and that empowering Presence as their confidence, new hopes flooded their darkened souls as though one flung open the shuttered windows in a house of mourning, and let the glorious light fill the room.

Simon, the Zealot, had his distinctive part to play in the period which preceded Pentecost. In the light of experience much that had seemed unintelligible now shone clear. The Master was truly the

Messiah. The Kingdom was one in which, in a way the faithful fathers had never dreamed, God and right were to reign supreme. By emancipation from sin's thralldom, man was to know a freedom surpassing any the most radical reformer had conceived, and thus the glorious liberty of the sons of God would be secured. The gradual unfolding of the Master's mission brought back enthusiasm's warm glow to the heart, and the whole company felt its effects. Simon had not the gifts and graces of others. His part was peculiarly his own, to enthuse and inspire. While a few were still wrestling with doubt, in his case

> "A warmth within the breast would melt
> The freezing reason's colder part,
> And like a man in wrath the heart
> Stood up and answer'd 'I have felt.' "

When the power of Pentecost came upon the Apostles, who first suggested sallying forth in the name of the Redeemer and taking the citadel by storm? Who planned further sorties against the might of wickedness, and when beaten back by weight of numbers, who rallied the forces of faith by holding out glowing hopes of conquest? Who nerved weak hearts and strengthened faltering feet among the numerous converts which followed the preaching of the Word? We can well believe that Simon's enthusiasm was a vital factor in securing the splendid victories of the cross.

What steam is to the cylinder, enthusiasm is to the soul. It was the fiery spirit of Peter, the Hermit, which set Europe ablaze with ardent de-

sire to free the Holy Land from the foot of the infidel, and which made the Crusades possible. It was the unquenchable enthusiasm of Columbus that enabled him to set the prow of his vessel to the uncharted wastes, and eventually to overcome almost insuperable obstacles, so that, as his monument at Washington records, he gave a new world to humanity. Garibaldi, fired with zeal for Italian freedom, cried, "He who loveth his country with his heart, not with his lips, let him follow me. I promise you hunger, forced marches, weariness, wounds and death, but at last victory." And his enthusiasm carried him to triumph. It nerved the hearts of Wilberforce and Lincoln in their conflict with slavery, and irresistibly they pressed on till the cause was supreme; and it sped the feet of Peary and Amundsen, of Scott and Shackleton, in their quest of the Poles.

Such enthusiasm, like faith, can subdue kingdoms, work righteousness, obtain promises, and stop the mouths of lions, and its enduring qualities are due to a great belief in the glorious cause of the Lord Jesus. Simon, the Zealot, became a force for righteousness because of his intimacy with Christ and his recognition of the Redeemer's power to save the world. A like faith will produce similar effects in our experience. We need the kindling of the Divine Spirit so that our cold hearts may glow with passionate love for the Redeemer. In the fires of devotion to Him, barriers that divide the Christian Church into unrelated sections and that minimise our efficiency shall be consumed. Formal worship and perfunctory service will be impossible, and through the empowering Spirit we shall be able to sweep aside

obstacles to progress, and the Kingdom shall be established.

Men are permitted to be enthusiasts in other directions—in literature and art, in science and sport. Why not in religion? We admire the patriot who does not spare himself in service for the public welfare. Why should not the universal empire of Christ awaken the same ardour and passionate zeal? Henry Drummond has well said: "True religion is . . . a fire! It is a sword. It is a burning, consuming heat, which must radiate upon everything around. The change to the Christlike Life is so remarkable that when one really undergoes it, he cannot find words in common use by which he can describe its revolutionary character. He has to recall the very striking phrases of the New Testament, which once seemed such exaggerations: 'a new *man,* a new *creature,* a new *heart,* a new *birth.*' His very life has been taken down and re-crystallised round the new centre. He has been born again. . . . An enthusiastic religion is the perfection of common sense. And to be beside oneself for Christ's sake is to be beside Christ, which is man's chief end for time and eternity."

This is the power that transforms life and its service. It makes the most exacting sphere of labour a place in which the soul finds ample scope to prove its prowess and demonstrate its devotion to the Divine will, and while the character is thus formed, incalculable good may be achieved. To realise how wide-reaching are the demands of the Master and how wondrous His love for the individual disciple is the way to this glowing enthusiasm which will last. "She loved much," Christ said

in explanation of that woman's lavish offering of the fragrant spikenard, and to love in that way is the secret of the outpoured life. After all, it is surely better to give our best with regal prodigality to such a Lord than hoard our spikenard till the chance of giving it to Him has passed. It is a thousand times better to turn the one talent to account than leave it to moulder in the earth, though we may never live to see the full results of our efforts. "It is better to begin your folio," says Robert Louis Stevenson, "even if the doctor does not give you a year, even if he hesitates about a month, make one brave push, and see what can be accomplished in a week. All who have meant good work with their whole hearts have done good work, although they may die before they have the time to sign it. . . . Does not life go down with a better grace, foaming in full body over a precipice, than miserably straggling to an end in sandy deltas?"

That surely describes the spirit of Simon; a mighty, earnest, zealous soul which breathed the intense reality of Christ and which wrought much in the Church of that day. We need his progressive mind, his sterling character, his noble enthusiasm, and each of us may well think of the careless and indifferent world and exclaim with Wesley:

"Enlarge, inflame and fill my heart
With boundless charity divine;
So shall I all my strength exert,
And love them with a zeal like Thine;
And lead them to Thine open side,
The sheep for whom their Shepherd died."

X

JUDE, THE INGENUOUS

"Judas, not *Iscariot."*—JOHN 14:22.

THE identity of this disciple merits a moment's consideration. He has sometimes been confused with the writer of the Epistle of Jude. That, however, can hardly be so, for there the author not only describes himself as "the brother of James," but he also leads us to infer that he was outside the Apostolate. He writes, "Beloved, remember ye the words which have been spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, how they said to you, In the last time there shall be mockers. . . ." He discriminates between the Apostles and himself, for otherwise he would surely have written not "they said" but "*we* said." Therefore, Jude of the Epistle was not included in the Twelve, but was possibly a brother of James, the author of the Epistle bearing that name, and also one of our Lord's brothers. In that case, he would be the Judas mentioned in Mark 6:3, "Is not this the Carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James and Joses, and *Juda* and Simon?" And the recorded incredulity of Christ's brethren, who did not believe in His mission at the outset, would also warrant the distinction drawn between them and the chosen disciples. There is another fact which must be noted, and it is of considerable importance. The Apostle Judas must not be

confused with the arch-traitor. John is careful to make this point clear. In the Upper Room, when Jesus was taking the last opportunity before His Passion of comforting and counselling His followers, this disciple shared in the discussion raised, and the writer of the Fourth Gospel describes him as

JUDAS, NOT ISCARIOT.

Bishop Westcott says: "The distinguishing clause seems at once to mark that Judas Iscariot was the more conspicuous of the two bearing the name, and also to express the instinctive shrinking of the Evangelist from even the momentary identification of the speaker with the betrayer, though he had distinctly marked the departure of Iscariot. If, as appears likely, St. John's narrative took shape in oral teaching addressed to a circle of disciples, the addition may have met with a look of surprise from the hearers." There are other reasons for noting the difference between the two men. Jude is also called Thaddeus and Lebbæus, the third name signifying "a man of heart," and that may indicate something of his character. Let us look at the contrast between Iscariot and this disciple. The traitor was certainly endowed with some good qualities, as we hope to show later, but he was also self-seeking and unstable. He was an opportunist, who, finding one way of gratifying his desires and furthering his plans closed to him, sought another. He was a man of mixed motives, full of duplicity and guile, eventually filling a prominent if shameful place in the history of the Apostolate. On the other hand, Judas, not Iscariot, was an artless, self-effacing soul. Guile-

less as Nathanael in many ways, he showed a simplicity and obedient faith which are delightful to behold. The questions he put to Christ sprang from a puzzled and yet pure heart, and we therefore call him Jude, the ingenuous, for he was manifestly sincere, outspoken, and frank, without trace of dissimulation.

So John's phrase is a distinction with a difference, as will be seen at a glance when we set the characteristics of the two apostles in contrast.

Judas Iscariot embodies:	Judas, not Iscariot, embodies:
Self-seeking	Self-effacement
Instability	Stability
Opportunism	Devotion
Duplicity	Simplicity
Prominence	Obscurity

Were further proof of this position needed, we have only to compare the attitude of the two in the sacred intimacy of the Upper Room.

It is there that we obtain the closest view we have of Jude's character. Like the rest of the company,

Jude Was Perplexed by the Position of Affairs.

The Master was leaving them, and at such a moment that seemed disastrous. Long before, Jude had responded to the divine summons, and whatever his lot was, he forsook everything—home, career, friends—for Christ's sake. That seemed

the only reasonable course at the time, and he had not regretted it. How could he? It had brought privileges that any man might have coveted. He had been drawn into close intimacy with the kingliest of men. He had not only listened to His heart-searching yet healing words, but he had also seen miracles wrought and majesty manifested, awakening awe in his soul. He had felt the invigorating influence of that noble life, and that in itself was reward enough for any sacrifices made.

There were many things Christ said and did which Jude felt were beyond his powers of comprehension, but knowing he was not as quick at understanding things as some of his brethren, he was content to trust the Master implicitly. His was the sunny, confiding nature of a child, and where love is great faith is strong. Of necessity, he would reason with himself, there must be some things unintelligible, considering that the Lord was indeed the Son of God. Peter had affirmed that fact; others had confirmed it. Why then need he ask questions or concern himself with what was beyond him?

With exuberant delight, he witnessed the crowds welcome the Master to Jerusalem, hailing Him as the Messiah, and Jude's heart swelled with justifiable pride to form part of Christ's bodyguard. He had glimpses of another side of his Lord's character when he saw the fraudulent money-changers turned out of the Temple they polluted, and inwardly had approved the courage Christ displayed, in thus cleansing the sacred courts of such pestilent parasites. Sovereignty was now only a matter of time. The period of obscure waiting was fast drawing to a close. The kingdom would soon be estab-

lished, and the Saviour's friends would share His splendour. So his simple mind ran on. But there came the rude awakening. In the privacy of their room, Jesus had thrust aside all that pointed to an immediate assumption of power, and Jude's castles in the air melted away.

"They fly forgotten as a dream
Dies at the opening day."

The Lord he loved so tenderly spoke of dying at the hands of His foes, betrayed by one of His brethren! Is it any wonder that Jude was perplexed by the position that confronted him?

Jude Was Puzzled by Christ's Promises

Though the Redeemer told them that He must leave them, He yet said, "Let not your hearts be troubled," as though they could part from Him without a pang. Yet He spoke of coming back so that they might resume their happy relationship. It all seemed so difficult to understand! Jude was relieved to find he was not the only one who found Christ's words puzzling. Thomas asked a question about the journey to which Christ referred. Philip followed with the request to see the Father of whom He spoke. And though the answers did not convey much to Jude, he was content if they satisfied his more enlightened friends. But misgiving deepened when the Master said, "He that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him and will manifest Myself unto him." There must be some mistake! Dr. Marcus Dods says: "The en-

couraging assurances of our Lord are interrupted by Judas Thaddeus. As Peter, Thomas and Philip had availed themselves of their Master's readiness to solve their difficulties, so now Judas utters his perplexity. He perceives that the manifestation of which Jesus had spoken is not public and general, but special and private; and he says: 'Lord, what has happened that Thou art to manifest Thyself to us and not to the world?' It would seem as if Judas had been greatly impressed by the public demonstration in favour of Jesus a day or two previously, and supposed that something must have occurred to cause Him now to wish to manifest Himself only to a select few. Apparently Judas' construction of the future was still entangled with the ordinary Messianic expectation. He thought Jesus, although departing for a little, would return speedily in outward Messianic glory and would triumphantly enter Jerusalem and establish Himself there. But how this could be done privately he could not understand. And if Jesus had entirely altered His plan, and did not mean immediately to claim Messianic supremacy, but only to manifest Himself to a few, was this possible?" Would not this mean defeating the divine end, which was surely to inaugurate the Messianic rule? And yet because he loved Christ so well, he found relief in believing trust.

Jude Was Satisfied

that Christ's promises were dependable. He could not fathom them. He did not know how the Saviour meant to manifest Himself to them, and yet not

divulge His return to others, but where reasoning failed, faith prevailed. Perhaps the Apostle had discovered the truth so well expressed by Tennyson:

> ". . . Nothing worthy proving can be proven,
> Nor yet disproven, wherefore be thou wise,
> Cleave ever to the sunnier side of doubt
> And cling to Faith beyond the forms of Faith."

Certainly, as he listened to the reassuring words of Christ his heart was quietened and made strong again. He felt that he could safely leave the methods by which the Master would manifest Himself to higher hands. With fine confidence Henry Ward Beecher wrote: "God's promises are the comfort of my life. Without them I could not stand for an hour in the whirl and eddy of things, in the sweep and surge of the nations; but I cannot tell *how* He will fulfil them any more than I can tell you from just what quarter the first flock of bluebirds will come in the spring. Yet I am sure that the spring will come upon the wings of ten thousand birds." It was enough that in the tempestuous times through which the disciples might pass, they were not to be left desolate nor without a guiding, steadying hand. Christ had promised His unfailing help and constant presence, and that meant the supply of all their need.

We can imagine this frank, ingenuous soul in subsequent days. When doubts assailed, his complete assurance that no matter what might mystify, Christ could be trusted, would impart confidence to the others. When danger threatened or the days were overcast with ominous clouds, his faith in Christ's

promises would gleam like a shaft of sunlight, dispelling the heart's gloomiest fears. Jude was the prototype of Livingstone in this, for when that fearless pioneer found himself beset with dangers from hostile tribes and difficulties that threatened to daunt his intrepid heart, he fell back on the promise of Christ, "Lo, I am with you alway," saying "It is the word of a Gentleman of the most sacred and strictest honour. I will not cross the river furtively by night as I intended. It would appear as flight, and should such a man as I flee? Nay, verily, I shall take observations for latitude and longitude to-day, though they may be the last."

How much sweeter life would be, and more serene our souls, were we to cultivate the courage of this simple, trustful, open-minded disciple. He had no secret plans to further at the expense of his friends. He sought no preferment, nor desired to exercise authority over those who worked with him in Christ's service. He admitted the profundity of the ocean he sailed without stopping constantly to sound its depths, content to know that there was a hand on the tiller, guiding his vessel aright. His life illustrates the fine words of the Shorter Catechism, "Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him for ever." And such "enjoyment" is found in implicit obedience and in a life attuned to the Divine will. New glories will be discovered in every phase of human experience. The world itself would be regarded as the habitation of the Eternal, for such a one could say:

> ". . . For I have learned
> To look on nature, not as in the hour

Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes
The still, sad music of humanity,
Nor harsh, nor grating, though of ample power
To chasten and subdue. And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns
And the round ocean and the living air
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man;
A motion and a spirit that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things."

The daily round will provide new opportunities of growing in grace and of reflecting the radiance of the Son of God seen in character and conduct, while the sorrows and strivings which are the portion of every soul, shall not be able to diminish its trust nor vanquish faith.

Such would be the life of Jude, the ingenuous. His heart tranquil and pure, would mirror the glory of the divine Master, while his frank and engaging manner would make religion attractive to all who came within the radius of his influence. His life would commend Christ by its consistency and cheerfulness, and there would be that freedom from anxiety and worry, no matter what the circumstances, that would create happiness for others as well as himself. Robert Louis Stevenson describes the effects of a life like that. "A happy man or woman is a better thing to find than a five-pound note. He or she is a radiating focus of good-will; and their entrance into a room is as though another candle had been lighted. We need not care whether they could

prove the forty-seventh proposition; they do a better thing than that; they practically demonstrate the great Theorem of the Liveableness of Life."

What is the secret of the serene, sunny life which Jude typifies? A life attuned and a heart at rest. And as Faber sings:

> "If our love were but more simple
> We should take Him at His word,
> And our lives would be all sunshine
> In the sweetness of our Lord."

XI

JAMES, THE MAN OF UNRECORDED FIDELITY

"James, the son of Alphæus."
—MATTHEW 10:3.

IT is supremely interesting to find, included in the Apostolic company, a representative of that "great multitude which no man can number," which does its daily duty, fills its allotted sphere with benefit to the whole community, but which passes on without receiving the meed of praise. It is a matter of some difficulty even to place this Apostle with any degree of certainty. Only by the process of elimination can we arrive at any facts concerning him beyond the description assigned in the Gospels that he was "James, the son of Alphæus." He is usually known as James the Less, to distinguish him from James, the brother of the Lord, who ultimately became head of the Jerusalem church, and the probable author of the Epistle of James. And the only ground we have for this is that, during Christ's ministry, none of His brethren believed on Him. So James, the Apostle, was not one of the Master's brothers; he was distinct from James, the son of Zebedee; and that is all the information at our disposal. Not all—for we know him as a quiet, unobtrusive disciple, who

Rejoiced in Christ's Companionship.

There are no details of the call which caused him to quit the sphere he occupied for one of toilsome hardship and even penury. Yet, as in the case of his fellow disciples, when the Master laid the spell of that compelling personality on him, he had no alternative, if he were to be true to his best self, but to obey. It was a privilege to be prized. He had been conscious at some time, as we all have been, that he was meant for other than the base and ignoble things that sought to claim supremacy in the soul. There was a longing for the ideal—something that would give scope for the unformed aspirations of his heart, something that would call forth the innate chivalry and self-sacrifice of his nature. He found that ideal actually realised in this Teacher from Nazareth. James was not the only one who felt that spell. The rich young ruler who came to Christ, stirred from his self-complacent piety by the singular nobility and superb qualities of the Master's life, experienced the same thing. So did the man who came with rapturous resolve, saying, "Master, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest." The former was held back by those imponderable yet enduring fetters of gold from which Christ offered to free him. The latter was daunted by the spectres of homelessness and want that seemed to hover about the path of discipleship. But James was made of sterner stuff. Though he was not bound by golden chains, certainly there were other ties holding him to his accustomed life, and just as difficult to break. Nor would he be blind to the considerations of prudence that weighed with

the other would-be follower. Yet the good was too alluring to be thrust aside by any thought of self-interest, and so we find James among the Apostles.

What visions broke upon his eyes! What marvellous unveilings of the Divine love were his! No matter what his first impressions of Jesus were, the passing days brought a deepened devotion that gripped and mastered him. He saw that sublime Saviour devoid of what commonly passes for dignity, but with humility that was regal, stooping to the lowliest needs and consorting with the most degraded. He felt the strange mingling of qualities which are usually regarded as opposites, for while Christ thus humbled Himself to the plane of the poorest, there was a kingly air about Him which made even the pomp and luxury of Simon's household seem barely fitting. The Master could speak with such tenderness that the children looked up from their play to catch a word or a smile, while at other times, when the hypocrisy of opulent Pharisaism turned its leering face to Him, His words of condemnation and rebuke cut like whips of steel. He could show His power by bringing light to darkened eyes and shuttered souls, by stilling the angry waves of the lake or the tumult of storm-swept hearts, by multiplying the loaves so that the famished were fed, or with the Bread of Life satisfying the soul-hungry. Yet, with it all, they and He sometimes knew what it was to be in sorest straits for daily necessities. James had never seen a nature so diverse, revealing such humility and dignity, such gentleness and severity, such wealth to meet humanity's requirements, and yet such poverty.

But the more he saw of Christ, the greater his admiration, and as the Master spent Himself without stint for the sake of suffering and sorrowing souls, James felt that here was truly the life which is life indeed. He could not grasp things quickly like John; he had not the power to express himself like Peter; he did not possess the fearless spirit of his namesake, the son of Zebedee, but what he could do, he would do—he would strive to follow the Master's example in deeds that brought a benediction to the soul. So we find in his life:

Reverence Expressed in Service.

James learned that love must find an outlet. His regard for Christ showed itself in a quickening of his whole nature. If his natural tendency was to self-indulgence or sloth, he felt new forces at work within him, and as opportunities came, he shared the work of his Master as far as it lay in his power. The fact that his service remains unrecorded does not disprove its value. On the contrary, the world is under continual debt to men whose names will never be known.

Who was the first to stand upon the shore and, looking across the blue waters that stretched from his feet, a shimmering yet unpassed barrier, resolved to conquer them? He may have seen a log floating by, and it suggested a means of transit. Later, finding that he could hollow out that log and find additional security and convenience, he made the first canoe, and so the slow process of evolving the ship began. That hardy and adventurous soul flung aside the fearsome terrors with which the waters were in-

vested, making them a means to compass desire. But that unknown mariner was the founder of our mercantile marine, the forerunner of Columbus and Cabot, of Raleigh, Drake and the Pilgrim Fathers. His service, if not his name, shall be held in everlasting remembrance.

Who was it first tried to reproduce the myriad sounds in Nature's vast orchestra—the diapason of the storm among the mountains, the gurgling rivulet, the melodious note of the birds, the sighing of the breeze or the shrill piccolo of the wintry winds? He was the man to whom music-lovers the world over should turn with homage. Who sought to reduce to writing the sounds by which men communicated with one another? The lover of our great English literature traces the path back through the Victorians to Milton, and Shakespeare, to Chaucer and Cædmon, the poor herdsman in the Abbey of Hilda. But ages before then, before the poets and prophets of the Hebrews, there was one, honoured yet unnamed, who was the father of letters. Who first instituted the bartering of commodities, and so laid the foundations of modern commerce? Who tried to reproduce the gorgeous colours of the rainbow and to capture the flush of the evening sky or the glint of sunlight on the dancing sea? To all these pioneers, the world is indebted, and yet their efforts remain unchronicled, and their identity is lost in the mists of antiquity.

James suggests the place that the unacclaimed yet fill, and the permanent benefits they confer on posterity. It may truly be said that James stands at the head of that noble company whom Lowell describes as:

"All-Saints—the unknown good that rest
In God's still memory folded deep;
The bravely dumb that did their deed,
And scorned to blot it with a name.
Men of the plain heroic breed,
That loved Heaven's silence more than fame."

Yet though the doers of the deed be denied the plaudits of the populace, the deed remains, and to unborn generations the blessings they gave to the world are transmitted. Many a successful man who has achieved fame and fortune, or who has been the means of helping the race forward, owes practically everything to the parents who gave him his start. They may have foregone many a comfort, and even have sacrificed some of the necessaries of life to give him a good education, and set his young feet on the first rungs of the ladder. Yet while such a man is rightly honoured for his worth, how often is the debt he owes his parents remembered? They fill premature graves because of the hardships their sacrifice entailed, and love's service is both unrecorded and unrewarded.

We know Abraham as the father of the faithful, but while we may perchance recall that his father was Terah, who knows his mother's name? None. It is never mentioned. Yet it would be a daring thing to suggest that some of those fine traits of character, marking him out as a man of great resource, and of singular susceptibility to spiritual influences were not derived from her. And we seldom think of her in that connection. The great commanding figure of Samson has always exercised a certain fascination for us. We read of the sacred safeguards set about that young soul, dedicated

from birth to the Divine service, and we honour Manoah, his father, for the efforts he made to carry out the injunctions of Jehovah. The daring escapades of the young giant are followed with interest —his fight with the lion, the foxes sent to fire the standing corn of the Philistines, the gates of Gaza carried off, and at last, after his folly and overthrow at the instigation of Delilah, the magnificent attempt he made to retrieve his honour. But these exploits completely overshadow his parents, and it is with the utmost surprise that we discover, although so much is said about his mother and the part she played in fitting her son for his mission, her name is unwritten.

David, the son of Jesse, is one of the best-known of Old Testament figures, and his meteoric course from shepherd boy to sovereign is as romantic as anything to be found even in fiction. But though we are familiar with the incidents of his varied life, and have found unspeakable comfort and delight in the sweet singer and his songs, again nothing is said of her who first led his thoughts to higher things and who implanted in his heart deep love for God, and the noble virtues of patience, submission and trust Not only has the world failed to recognise the greatness of such unselfish service, but it has also failed to see that without this valiant if untrumpeted heroism life would be immeasurably poorer.

It has been pointed out that nearly all the great music of the world has been derived from humble sources or from an environment that at best strikes us as uncongenial. Beethoven's father was a dissipated vocalist. Sebastian Bach was the son of a poor musician who lived in the utmost penury. Che-

rubini came from the common people, while Haydn's father was a wheelwright and his mother had been a cook. Mozart was born in the home of an unsuccessful musician, and Rossini was the son of a strolling horn-player. Schubert's father was a poor schoolmaster; Handel's father, a barber and surgeon; Verdi's a peasant of Lombardy. Gluck, Cimarosa, and Weber, all sprang from a like lowly stock.

At rare intervals there has been some acknowledgment on the part of the recipient of such benefits. There was a man in London, well known for his tireless efforts on behalf of the outcast and unfortunate. He was regarded with considerable amusement by those of his own class. They could not understand him. One of his eccentricities was to carry an old silver watch which he would occasionally fondle, saying, "This watch was given to me by the best friend I ever had." Who was she? When this man was born, his mother gave him to the care of her maid. That godly woman regarded the child as a sacred trust, and spent herself for its good. She taught the boy to pray, and later to read the Bible, at the same time inspiring sympathy for other children who, like himself, lacked a mother's love and care. He grew up with a resolute determination to give his strength to the weak, his gifts to the poor, and his love to the loveless and unlovely, and Lord Shaftesbury's work abides to this day. We know that work, we know his worth, but can we name his faithful nurse? Many people to whom Shaftesbury's life is familiar would find themselves unable to answer the question, and the name of Maria Millis would convey nothing to them were it mentioned.

Yet under God the springs of that stream of philanthropy were in her.

Much has been written of Carlyle, and his early struggles, his dogged determination to overcome his difficulties. His trenchant criticisms of society and his mordant humour, awaken admiration bordering on enthusiasm in those who have followed his career. But strong and searching as some of his writings are, he never penned anything finer than the tribute he paid to his mother. She had sometimes expressed concern about her talented son. His opinions puzzled her, if they did not actually cause pain to her simple heart. But when he was well past middle life, Carlyle wrote: "I will try to live by the noble example you showed; to hold fast for myself, and speak abroad to others the precious, simple wisdom I learned from my mother. Oh, thank you, dear, pious-hearted mother, for the breeding you gave me; things that I feel to be wise, to be God's truth, fit to be spoken aloud before all mortals; how often, with an unspeakable tenderness of recollection, do I find—*that* now is thy mother's; that was got from thy poor mother long ago. May God reward her!"

Thus though James stands as the type of unrecorded and unrewarded service, he merits not only the place our Lord gave him as one of the Apostles, but also a place in our hearts. Such a life has a boundless influence. Work done for Christ's sake has qualities that make it eternal. Good achieved by stealth, innumerable acts of kindness and love, even though never spoken about, are like flowers which sow themselves and bloom again with every recurring Spring. And though, as in the case of the Samaritan who aided the stricken traveller, the doer

of the deed remains unidentified and unrewarded, that does not diminish the value of the help given. This is of immeasurable inspiration and encouragement to all who, in public or private life, in the spheres of business, Church, or home, are striving to express their love for Christ in service for others. Many a time, we feel the futility of our efforts. So little seems to be accomplished, and the results are apparently out of all proportion to the sacrifice entailed. Our motives are impugned, and our methods unfairly criticised. Our endeavours are mocked or met by ingratitude. Is it worth while? The fine courage with which we began is daunted. Enthusiasm evaporates. We are in danger of becoming, like many once-ardent seekers after good, extinct volcanoes which at one time glowed with activity, but are now cold and frigid.

We shall escape such a deplorable condition if James's example is kept before us. We cannot gauge the worth of our service, nor the value of our lives to the world. The coral reefs and islands that stud the ocean like so many gems, are formed of tiny creatures that living, build themselves into the structure and then die, and the individual Christian, intent on doing the Master's will and so expressing his devotion to Christ, shall be instrumental in building up the heavenly Kingdom. Our service may seem unimportant, but immeasurable as eternity itself is the influence of a consecrated soul, constrained to high endeavour by the love of Christ. The impress of our lives will remain when we have passed on.

The commission which made James's life truly great—to follow Him who went about doing good —comes to each of us, saying:

". . . Spend, and be spent,
Thy joy to do the Father's will."

In days of disillusionment, when the ideals of unselfish concern for the welfare of others are either discredited or discarded, we need anew that which shall redeem life from destruction, and make the most menial and often meaningless task, a sacrament. The incentive to live nobly, to strive and serve our brethren to the fullest extent of our powers is enshrined in the motto of G. F. Watts, "The utmost for the highest." He set his face like a flint against the unworthy. He refused to employ his talent for merely personal ends. The consequence is that his work, even if he had never initialled a canvas, reveals the high purpose and lofty ideals of the soul from which it sprang, and remains to guide and inspire men even though the artist himself has gone. Gladstone once affirmed: "Forty years and over have I spent in the service of my country, and during that time I have come in contact with sixty of the master-minds of the world, and all of them were Christians but seven."

"The modern world," it has been said, "is anxious to have instruction in certain directions, from any who are qualified or otherwise to impart that knowledge. What is it? It says, 'Teach us how to get a living.' But the Christian Faith while not ignoring the pressing fact of man's livelihood, embraces the lesser when it enforces the greater, and so we strive to impart the secret which makes for blessedness and teaches men how to live."

So James, the Apostle of unrecorded service, gloriously dumb concerning his deeds, speaks with

moving eloquence to the unpraised disciples in the midst of life's exacting tasks, bidding them take heart of grace. Nothing done for Christ's sake can fail of its due appraisement. Though the undiscriminating world may not recognise our efforts, the appreciation is only deferred.

> "My crown is in my heart, not on my head;
> Not deck'd with diamonds and Indian stones,
> Nor to be seen; my crown is call'd content."

Unrecorded, they shall not remain unrewarded. One day, when the toilsome round need no longer be trodden, when the warrior scarred by many an assault lays down his weapons, when the implements of our life-work are handed to those who shall take up the task, we shall hear the tones of that loved voice saying, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Then shall all the struggles we now endure, the misunderstandings and lack of appreciation which damp our ardour, be seen in their true proportions. Then shall the heart rejoice in the glorious heritage of the sons and daughters of God. Till that day dawns, be like James, "steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

XII

JUDAS, THE MAN OF PERVERTED POWERS

"Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went to betray Him."

—MARK 14: 10.

SOME men have a strange title to fame. One for his valour on the battlefield is remembered with pride by his fellow countrymen. Another is famous because of the influence he wielded, the genius he displayed, or the self-sacrifice and beautiful spirit which were characteristic of his life. But there are others who have a name because of their evil deeds. The most famous or infamous of these who have sacrificed principle for pelf, honour for some proffered good of the passing hour, and who have betrayed the best that some gross desire might be satisfied, is Judas Iscariot. Was there ever a friend so faithless, or a heart so heavily weighted with wickedness? Did ever a day of promise thus fall to night amid clouds so dark and full of terror? For in this sentence is summed up the tragedy of a soul: *"Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve."* What might have been his wealth in things spiritual! What privileges were his, walking with the blessed Lord in the intimacy of such discipleship! Yet in spite of what he might have been, he fell so low that to posterity he should become the synonym for basest treachery and blackest guilt.

Why Was Judas One of the Twelve?

Judas Iscariot was the only member of the company who was not a Galilean. His name hints at this, for he was the man of Kerioth, probably a town in Southern Judæa. But we are more concerned to ask why did Christ choose him if he were so evil-hearted? It is a question that has often been asked. Did Jesus know full well when calling Judas into the apostolic company that it was he who should eat the bread of friendship and then lift the heel of bitter enmity? Was it simply that the Scriptures might be fulfilled? Some have argued that it was; that Jesus knew exactly that this was a man capable of the most villainous treachery and that, in order that the Divine purpose might be brought to completion, a scoundrel was chosen to be the friend of the Man he was to betray. But it has been said that "Iscariot was not chosen merely to be a traitor, as an actor might be chosen to play the part of Iago. The end pointed at in the Scripture quoted might be ultimately served by his being chosen, but that end was not the motive of the choice." Were it otherwise, it were a contradiction of Christ's attitude to this man, for though he was "Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him," he was also "one of the twelve."

Then, does that mean that Jesus was deceived in him? Does it imply that our Lord did not fully know the kind of man He was calling? That hardly seems feasible because He chose the other disciples with such discrimination. Did He not describe Nathanael's character before a personal acquaintance with him had been made? Did He not know the inmost thoughts of those disciples when they

were mystified by His teaching? Did He not read the deep desires that lay beneath the rubbish of the years filling the heart of the Samaritan woman? There can be no doubt that Christ saw many things hidden from men; that He wielded powers unpossessed by others. His divinity demanded this, His unique mission implied it. But in the fact of the Incarnation lies another series of possibilities that must affect our view of this matter. To use Paul's phrase: "He emptied Himself of His glory." He laid aside that which would interfere with the complete assumption of our humanity. And He became really man in all that the term involves, though in essence still divine. This involved a certain voluntary limitation of His powers, though it would not, because of His perfect relationship with God, preclude Him from enjoying those peculiar powers that were necessary for the special work He had entered the world to accomplish. Even as He was not omnipresent, so, too, He may have laid aside omniscience. Certainly Jesus Himself admitted ignorance about some things, referring His questioners to the Father in whom alone complete knowledge of the universe and the Divine will for it was then to be found. Bishop Lightfoot states the position thus:

"It is said by some that Christ in making His choice of Judas did not read the inmost depths and issues of his character; and by others that seeing all distinctly even to the end He kept him near to Himself as one trusted equally with the others of the twelve. Both these forms of explanation involve partial solutions of infinite problems. The question raised by the first group leads us at once to the final mystery of divine Providence. This, as far as we can represent it to ourselves, deals with general results and not with indi-

vidual wills. The question raised by the second group leads us at once to the final mystery of the union of perfect divinity and perfect humanity in the One Person of the Lord. And here the records of the Gospel lead us to believe that the Lord had perfect human knowledge realised in a human way, and therefore limited in some sense, and separable in consciousness from His perfect divine omniscience. He knew the thoughts of men absolutely in their manifold possibilities, and, yet, as a man, not in their actual future manifestations. These two final mysteries are not created by the fact that Judas was chosen by Christ among the twelve. They really underlie all religious life, and indeed all finite life. For finite being includes the possibility of sin, and the possibility of fellowship between the Creator and the creature."

Where then does this lead us? Surely in one way it makes Christ more truly one with us. He chose to be subject to our limitations. He was truly man. But because both His relation with God and His mission among men were unique, He had powers of discernment and of insight withheld from the rest of the race. In general the prophecies regarding the Messiah would be known to Jesus, and the future would be in broad outline revealed also, and with that there would be all essential knowledge of life's happenings and man's needs. This shows us, then, how Judas came to be chosen. Jesus read the man's character even as He had read the rest. He saw Judas to be a man who could render much service. He was doubtless a man of sagacity, clearheaded and of sound judgment, and as such he might be of great assistance to the Master. His knowledge of the world and his capacity for finance could all be utilised for the Kingdom. So Judas was called. He was chosen like the others because of the gifts he

displayed, and the personal contribution he could make to the efficiency of the Twelve. He was not given the bag because he was a thief. He became a thief because he had the bag.

Granting all this, however, Christ discerned even more. He saw that Judas was a man in which the possibilities were great for evil as well as good. He had a mind that alternated between the high and the low, the spiritual and the sordid. Which set of desires would triumph? There were wonderful potentialities if Judas would only choose the good. He might not only place the kingdom and its affairs on a sound basis, but also could commend the word he preached by his knowledge of what the commercial man of his day had to face. But if he should choose the lower? Then were there possibilities terrible to contemplate. He might be so driven by selfish desires and sordid ambition that he would stop at nothing. He would sell his choicest possessions, he might betray his best friends if he could make something out of the transaction. We sum up the whole matter by saying, Christ chose him to be an apostle, not a traitor; Judas eventually chose to be a traitor, not an apostle.

Judas Had Some Qualities That Achieve Greatness

He possessed a certain amount of real talent. That is evidenced by the position he enjoyed, for granting that their limited finances did not offer much scope for exploitation, on the other hand, it may be urged that the straitened circumstances in which they often lived required the most careful hus-

banding of their means. Quite early, it would appear, Judas showed marked ability in this direction. By common consent he took charge of the funds, and his capable arrangement of their affairs made the choice seem a happy one. We have no information regarding the source of their supplies, but it is conceivable that gifts in gratitude for some remarkable cure, or in acknowledgment of blessings received under the Master's ministrations would occasionally find their way to the treasury. While, remembering that some of the disciples had formerly been engaged in prosperous undertakings, it is quite possible that they would sometimes receive remittances from their friends.

But apart from that aspect of things, there would be a certain quiet capability and shrewdness exhibited by this man which would be a great satisfaction to Jesus. Judas would be invaluable when once he had conquered his baser tendencies. He would not be prone to adopt impossible schemes nor follow will-o'-the-wisp tactics that the over-zealous might suggest as a means of extending the Kingdom. He was too sane. He would not be likely to allow anything in the nature of a revolutionary *coup* such as his namesake, Judas of Gamala, or his fellow-disciple, Simon, the Zealot, might have loved. He was too sagacious. On the contrary, an ordered, systematic mind such as his would be inclined to insist on the methods Christ had laid down as most effective—the pervasive power of the Gospel as illustrated by the leaven in the meal, the healthful effects produced by salt, or the guiding and gladdening light of a city set on a hill. Such a well-balanced mind would do much in coming days if only grace

were allowed to dominate the soul, and in possessing such a disposition which would not be unduly affected by life's vicissitudes, Judas had one of the indispensable elements of greatness at his command, coupled with power to visualise future developments.

> ". . . Bless'd are those
> Whose blood and judgment are so well commingled
> That they are not a pipe for fortune's finger
> To sound what stop she pleases."

That he could see ahead is evident. The fact that Jesus called him is only one side of the matter. Judas obeyed that call. What were his reasons? One of them, at any rate, was the appeal Christ made to his better nature, and the practical demonstration of real religion which Judas witnessed. There was nothing in Christ's teaching to liken to the dry dialectics and profitless hair-splitting which characterised current religion. Nor was there that glaring disparity between precept and practice with which Judas had often been confronted among the ecclesiastics of his experience. But there was not only genuine concern for the common good, but also what is even more to the point, genuine goodness behind that concern. Christ's conquest up to that point had been the triumph of a noble personality over one who could appreciate virtue, and who sometimes felt the lure of honour and integrity as things to be coveted. The musician of limited ability is often keenest in his appreciation of a master's genius, even though he knows he can never excel in such splendid fashion, and there was something in the exalted character of Christ which made even Judas desire a life so selfless and sublime. When,

too, he heard the Master speak of that Kingdom in which all lesser dynasties would be merged, his complex nature, with its strange mingling of what was best and basest, was moved to marvel at the coming glories in which the disciples should share. Thus as much as in the case of any of the disciples, the choice of Judas as one of the company was justified. He had the same opportunities of advancement in knowledge and in grace. The same helpful influences operated on his soul, urging him to daily increasing love of the pure and unselfish. Why, then were they ineffectual? We have seen some of the Twelve moving steadily onward from unworthy views and selfish ambitions to a finer spirit and deeper love for Christ. They were not more free to choose the better way than Judas, nor did he lack any advantage they enjoyed. The difference was wholly due to Judas himself. Christ's call imposed responsibility which is the invariable accompaniment of privilege, but the Master was blameless in that. The opportunity of turning the soul to noble and worthy aims confronted this man as it does all men who meet with Christ, and he deliberately allowed the base to master his soul. Sin has been aptly defined as "the deliberate and wilful act of a free agent who sees the better and chooses the worse," and here we see the effects of that choice.

Judas Disregarded the Conditions of Greatness

These are patient obedience to the known right and undeviating integrity of character. Perhaps Judas did not know the exact moment when deterio-

ration set in. A man may have the seeds of consumption in his body, and may even be in the grip of that fell malady for a time without knowing it. Then the disease manifests itself and instant steps to combat it are imperative. There came a day when Judas consciously felt himself out of tune with the Master and His message. There had been serious spiritual decline, perhaps due to neglect of personal devotions and yielding to temptation. Judas secretly yet certainly broke faith with his Saviour and his better self. Heaven is not reached by a single bound, nor hell by a single fall. Others had been tempted. They had been overtaken by faults due to their frailty or their fickleness, but though they fell it was with their faces toward the light, and penitently they rose to strive again to follow Christ. With Judas it was different—but only because he willed it, and so, as the poet puts it:

> "It is the little rift within the lute,
> That by and by will make the music mute,
> And ever widening slowly silence all."

The first deviation from the right, whatever it was, led to a series of petty pilferings and minor misdeeds which, though they may not have been too serious in themselves, yet like dead leaves on the surface of the stream plainly indicated the direction of the current. The first to detect the change would be the Master Himself, though it would be in the demeanour of the man. There came a cloud dimming the brightness of his faith, and an apparent inability to to look into the Lord's face when he was addressed. There were periods of moodiness, flashes of temper

and flushes of colour which denoted a heart disquieted. And although the matter was not openly discussed, it is impossible to believe that the Saviour did not endeavour to persuade this errant soul to return to the paths he had forsaken.

Had the others any hint that something was wrong? Without being able to bring positive proof of his defalcations, there is no doubt they had their suspicions. Gifts which ought to have replenished the treasury apparently did little to relieve the stringency sometimes felt. But their occasional questions were either skilfully parried or else resented, and suspicion hardened into conviction that Judas was unsatisfactory.

If any of the Twelve remained unconvinced of that, his doubts were dispelled by what happened in the little home at Bethany. Lazarus had been given back to his sisters from the spectral hand of death, and in glad acknowledgment of Christ's matchless compassion Martha insisted that a supper should be given in His honour. It was but a simple meal, poor in contrast with, for example, the sumptuous board and ostentatious display of Simon, the Pharisee's, establishment, but that home was rich with love's homage. The guests reclined at the table, Lazarus being next to the Lord, and the disciples listening with delight to Christ's conversation, and looking at Lazarus with eyes in which the light of wonder still lingered like the glow of sunset in the sky. Martha had been serving her friends, counting it too great an honour to leave to other hands, even had she not been too poor to have domestic help, and her sister had shared the privilege. Then Mary had slipped away for a time, returning

unnoticed. Kneeling behind Christ's outstretched feet, she poured out, not only her cruse of spikenard, but also the overflowing love of her heart. She was hidden from the company as she crouched there; only One knew what she was doing, but suddenly a breath of perfume like the spice-laden air of evening swept the board. "The house was filled with the odour of the ointment." "What is that?" The question leapt from the lips of one, and wondering looks passed round. Confused as though detected in something unmaidenly, the colour mounting to cheek and brow and then receding till the face was deathly wan, Mary had risen to her feet. Her eyes were bright with unshed tears. She had not dreamed that her secret act of adoring love would have thus been read by all, for acting on impulse, she had brought the spikenard without thinking that its fragrance would declare itself unmistakably in the room. But even as Jesus reassured her with a smile, and His hand laid on her arm, a question rang out like the discordant hooting of the owl while the nightingale sings in the copse, "Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?"

A flush of shame suffused the girl's cheek. Looks of indignation and anger flashed upon the speaker. It was Judas! Apparently unconcerned and coldly critical, he heard Christ's remonstrance, "Suffer her to keep it against the day of My burying." Jesus knew the love which prompted this lavish devotion and praised the heart that was swift to show its gratitude to the living rather than wait till death should seal those eyes from the gladdening spectacle. Better a kind word in life than an oration at death.

Better a bunch of flowers to the living than costly wreaths upon the chill tomb! Mary fled from the room, her hands vainly striving to hide the flow of tears, and the murmur of men speaking angrily in an undertone marked the end of that hour. But not the end of the incident. It had seared the mind of them all. They did not always see eye to eye with each other, yet they were agreed in this; a more despicable and wanton act of deliberate cruelty had never been known. Even though Judas had thought it, he might have had some sense of propriety and some consideration for those who had passed through so much, who had been lifted from the depths of sorrow to heights of happiness unconceived by the human heart, and who had striven to show their gratitude to the Lord. Why had Judas acted so? The question was answered possibly by the outspoken Peter; certainly by the conviction now crystallising in the hearts of them all: "This he said, not because he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and having the bag took away what was put therein."

We cannot declare too firmly the fact that Judas was not like that at the outset. There may have been tendencies to dishonesty; we have admitted that he was a man of mixed motives. But he was free to resist the evil and choose the good, to be an apostle or an apostate. Were it not so, were there foreordaining that *made* him act as he did then and afterwards, how could he be held responsible for his knavery? The truth is, he harboured evil thoughts, he permitted his imagination to circle about forbidden things, and without intending to go to the lengths he did, he found, like Samson,

that a man may play with fire, but he cannot carry it in his bosom and not be burned. Unwittingly he had revealed the actual state of things to his fellow-apostles, and their manifest disgust with his mercenary ways precipitated the crisis of his career.

Doubtless, a feeling that he had lost caste made Judas somewhat reckless. It was plain that the Kingdom was a shadowy, insubstantial dream, and nothing in the way of tangible recompense was likely to accrue from that direction. It was even more evident that it was impossible to retain his place among the Twelve. They knew too much and suspected more. How then could he make the best of a difficult situation and recoup himself for the profitless time he had spent with these Galileans?

Judas Forfeited His Last Chance of Greatness

by sordid selfishness. Several attempts have been made in recent years, with an ingenuity worthy of a better cause, to place Judas in a more favourable light than that of a base-hearted traitor. It has been suggested that he did not really intend to betray Christ to His enemies. All he had in mind was a strategic attempt to force the Master's hand. This may have been due to impatience. Like the others, Judas had seen Christ turn aside from proffered kingship, and he had been disappointed. He knew that the Lord possessed marvellous powers, yet He consistently refused to reap any benefit from their use either for Himself or His friends. He

was too spiritually-minded to see His chances or seize the advantages that were thrust upon Him. So, argue the ingenious apologists, Judas conceived this plan. When Christ actually found Himself arrested, and in the grip of his foes, rather than let the sceptre be wrested from His hands, He would be compelled to declare Himself as the Messiah-King. The lowly guise of the Galilean Teacher would be thrown aside. The angelic legions would be marshalled against the craft of Judaism and the power of Rome, and the victory would be complete. His Kingdom would come!

Even John Ruskin, usually so safe a guide, describes the act of Judas as mercenary rather than treacherous: "He was only a common money-lover, and like all money-lovers did not understand Christ —couldn't make out the worth of Him or meaning of Him. He didn't want Him to be killed. He was horror-struck when he found that Christ would be killed; threw his money away instantly, and hanged himself. How many of our present money-seekers, think you, would have the grace to hang themselves, whoever was killed? But Judas was a common, selfish, muddle-headed, pilfering fellow; his hand always in the bag of the poor, not caring for them. He didn't understand Christ; yet believed in Him much more than most of us do, had seen Him do miracles, thought He was quite strong enough to shift for Himself, and he, Judas, might as well make his own little bye-perquisites out of the affair. Christ would come out of it well enough, and he have his thirty pieces. Now that is the money-seeker's idea all over the world."

If these explanations were correct, they would

plainly contradict the considered judgment of those who knew Judas best, and who could form an opinion of the man. What is the verdict of his associates? That he was a traitor and a thief. Impatient because Christ's kingdom tarried? John the Baptist was perplexed by those delays. When he was flung into prison, at the mercy of the venomous Herodias, he contrived to send a message to the Master, "Art Thou He that cometh or look we for another?" But his impatience did not cause him to become a plotter against Christ, even though delay for John meant death.

From what we know of Judas, we can construct the probable theory that lay behind the course he took. He had rendered his own position untenable. As we have said, he had come to regard Jesus as an unpractical visionary whose promises and prognostications remained unfulfilled, and so he determined to secure what he could, and covertly escape from the district as soon as he felt safe. He knew the hatred of the priests and their fervent desire to stifle this Nazarene, and he was sufficiently astute to see the difficulties that would arise with Pilate on the one hand, and the populace on the other, unless their plans could be arranged secretly. There must be a sudden swoop before any one suspected what was on foot, and that would mean knowing just when and where to find their victim. Moreover, it would be a distinct advantage to the leaders to have Jesus denounced by one of His own disillusioned disciples, and for such reliable information they would be prepared to pay handsomely. Judas certainly never intended to betray Christ for thirty pieces of silver; it is equally sure that be-

trayal was the one thing he had in mind. What it might mean to Christ was no longer his concern: He might escape or He might not. Judas was intent on his own retreat with a respectable sum as recompense for the risks he ran and the odium which would follow. And as his purpose hardened, no memory of past privileges or the faith Christ had reposed in him had any effect to move him from his dastardly course. Shakespeare might have been describing Judas, as well as Shylock, when he said:

> "You may as well go stand upon the beach,
> And bid the main flood bate his usual height;
> You may as well use question with the wolf,
> Why he hath made the ewe bleat for the lamb;
> You may as well forbid the mountain pines
> To wag their high tops and to make no noise
> When they are fretted with the gusts of heaven;
> You may as well do anything most hard,
> As seek to soften that—than which what's harder—
> His Jewish heart."

But why do we say that Judas did not intend to do this deed for such a paltry sum? Thirty pieces of silver would amount to only about £4, and granting that the purchasing power might have been double, it was inadequate as a motive for such a crime. Therein lies our answer. Judas resolved to sell his information, but he was gauging the price it would bring by the anxiety of Christ's antagonists to complete His downfall. But he failed to allow for a subtlety which was superior to his own. Once his decision was made, he sought an early opportunity of meeting with the rulers. His refusal

to divulge his mission to any but the principals, coupled with the ill-restrained vehemence of the man, secured the interview he sought, and with the doors shut, Judas laid his plans before them. He saw the intense satisfaction that gleamed in the eyes of some, and even the air of unconcern that others assumed could not conceal from Judas that his mission was most opportune. Standing apart, he watched their faces as they discussed his suggestion in an undertone. Would they agree? He is beckoned to approach the table again, and to his relief, they consent to his proposition and fix the details of their plans.

"And now, my masters, that the place and hour alone remain to be decided—and that shall be made known to you as soon as I have the means of finding out the Galilean's movements—there is another small matter to be discussed. What shall be my reward for thus secretly putting Him into your hands?"

His greedy, glinting eyes scanned the council. They knew, of course, that a price would be demanded, but in the fashion of the East, no hint of such considerations had passed on either side until this moment.

There was silence. Then Caiaphas, fingering his beard, turned to Judas. "Ah, true! Thy reward? Well, is it not enough that thou hast wreaked thy revenge upon the Deceiver? We can promise that thou shalt see Him well and truly tried, and without doubt made to suffer for the sharpness of His tongue and the spell of Beelzebub He has cast over the common people. No? Not enough? Thou dost require fuller payment than the knowledge

thou hast acted as a son of Jacob ought against a blasphemer and profane? Then, because we hold this Jesus to be altogether one unworthy of our nation, thou shalt have thirty pieces of silver—the price of a slave, dog. Now, go!"

"Thirty!" A glow of anger overspread the brow of the betrayer. "Thirty pieces! My lord Caiaphas is pleased to jest. This is no slave! Though I may have little cause to love Him, He is a man of noble qualities, and by the people He is accounted a prophet. Let it be three hundred, and I am content."

"Nay, thirty it shall be, and not even the dust of the balance shall be added thereto. Now, what sayest thou?"

"Then I refuse to do thy bidding," replied Judas. "Let another be sought to track the lion to his lair. Thou shalt not have mine aid; no! not by the smallest finger of this hand shall thy plottings be furthered."

A scowl darkened the face of the High Priest.

"Plottings! 'Tis an ugly word on thy lips. Thou dost refuse, and dost presume to accuse us. Look, thou, to this." His fingers clutched the table as though he would fain grasp the throat of this man staring so insolently in his face. "Thou didst come to sell the Nazarene, to put Him in our power. Dost thou not perceive that thou hast put thyself also in our hands? Refuse now to proceed in thy course, and word shall be carried to thy fisher-friends—to yon stout-limbed Simon, perchance—and what shall save thee then? Plottings! Didst thou not come with thy skilfully woven web, in which this Jesus should be ensnared? Didst thou

not ask for silver as the price of thy betrayal of Him whom thou didst call Master? Choose, then. Thirty pieces for thy part, or thy life forfeit to Simon Peter—which?"

Judas was subtle, but even he was no match for the crafty Caiaphas. He was indubitably in their power. Either he must betray Christ as he had proposed, or be denounced to the disciples, and after what had passed, coward at heart as he was, Judas felt that he had to submit. Better far had he gone forth then, and hanged himself. At least he would have stayed his heart from its vile pursuit. But believing there was no way of escape, he agreed to the bargain Caiaphas had made, and foiled and fuming, went out into the night, black as his own base soul. He had covenanted with them —he, one of the Twelve—and in spite of himself, for thirty paltry pieces of silver.

> "Still as of old,
> Man by himself is priced.
> For thirty pieces Judas sold
> Himself, not Christ."

With that foul deed looming large in his breast, see Judas suffering the pointed pangs of a now protesting conscience. There in that Upper Room, he must take his place as one of the trusted friends of Christ. It was necessary in order to ascertain what the Master's movements were likely to be that night. Yet it meant submitting to the gentle touch of those hands, as the condescending Saviour knelt to wash those feet which would soon be speeding on their treacherous errand. It meant listening to those tender words of farewell, and looking into those eyes

which in turn seemed to search the hidden fastnesses of his being. It meant hearing those loving tones saying, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray Me," and the solemn warning which even then might have changed one less hardened in sin. Yet he had the effrontery to ask with the others, "Is it I?" It meant reclining there and receiving from Jesus the morsel called "the sop," which was understood to be showing signal favour to one of the guests. Surely this was heaping coals of fire on his head! With profound relief he heard Christ say, "That thou doest, do quickly." It gave him an excuse to leave those accusing eyes and to escape from the dark looks of his former friends. Hastening along the streets of the capital, looking back again and again to see if he were being followed, he sped on his errand. He loathed himself almost as much as those to whom he was going, but he knew he was truly in their power. The sooner it were over, the better!

We know only too well what followed. The garden was their rendezvous. There the armed party came upon the Master and His disciples. The prearranged signal was given: Judas went up to a white-clad figure emerging from the shadows to where the moon cast a pattern of fretted silver through the trees, and setting those blasphemous lips against the sacred cheek, he said, "Hail, Master!" The brief show of resistance on the part of Peter was swiftly overcome, and Christ was in the grip of His captors.

The money was paid over, but like a haunted man, Judas lurked in the shadows of the High Priest's court. It seemed as though every stone were crying out against him. Thief! Traitor! Murderer!

His impulse was to flee, but bonds intangible yet too strong to break held him there till he should see the end of that night's work. The examination before Annas and Caiaphas resulted in condemnation, and the Prisoner was sent to Pilate. Then Judas could endure it no longer. The accursed silver burned the fingers that clutched it. These priestly plotters had tricked him. His own bad heart had led him into a deed that now made life a hell. The council was just dispersing as he burst into the hall, and cried out in passionate tones, "I have sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood." There was mocking laughter as a well remembered voice replied, "What is that to us? See thou to it!" He flung the silver contemptuously in their faces and went out to his doom.

> "The moving finger writes; and, having writ,
> Moves on: nor all thy piety nor wit
> Shall lure it back to cancel half a line,
> Nor all thy tears wash out a word of it."

Truly he had sinned, and his sin was but the culminating tragedy of a man of perverted powers. So much had been possible. His evil propensities might have been overcome, and his life have been a noble thing. He was chosen to be a companion of Christ; he chose to be the betrayer of the best Friend mankind ever saw. Deterioration, by slow degrees brought death, and the man of promise is branded to all time as pervert, the one-time apostle as apostate thrice-accursed.

XIII

THE MASTER OF THE TWELVE

"Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that Thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God."

—John 6: 68-69.

WE now change our point of view. Our attention hitherto has been centred on the Apostles. We have endeavoured to understand their different dispositions, to follow the development of their character, and to gain some fuller idea of what discipleship means. But now we turn from the pools and lakelets which like mirrors reflect something of the glory of the blue sky and the splendour of the midday sun, and though our eyes may be dazzled by its brilliance, we would fain look on the Sun of Righteousness.

Christ's Love of Humanity

This must have impressed His friends from the outset. He was entirely different from other religious leaders, for while they held aloof from men, making them realise the impassable barriers erected by a fictitious holiness, Christ, on the other hand, not only mingled with the ordinary folk about Him, but seemed to find satisfaction in their companionship. This much is certain. When the call that

separated Him from His life at the carpenter's bench came to Him, the solitary way commenced. The home at Nazareth was virtually closed to Him. His former friends and associates disliked the idea that one of their own number should be set in the seat of the Rabbis without either the privileges or the education that were supposed to be indispensable for such an exalted position. In his peculiarly telling style, De Witt Talmage says: "Hear me while I tell you of a poor young man who came up from Nazareth to produce a thrill such as has never been excited by any other. Napoleon had around him the memories of Austerlitz and Jena, but here was a man who had fought no battles, who wore no epaulettes, who brandished no sword. He is no titled man of the schools, for he never went to school. He had probably never seen a prince, or shaken hands with a nobleman. The only extraordinary person we know of as being in his company was his own mother, and she was so poor that in the most delicate and solemn hour that ever comes to a woman's soul she was obliged to lie down amid camel drivers grooming the beasts of burden. I imagine Christ one day standing in the streets of Jerusalem. A man descended from high lineage stands beside Him, and says, 'My father was a merchant prince: he had a castle on the beach at Galilee. Who was your father?' Christ answers, 'Joseph, the carpenter.' A man from Athens is standing there, unrolling his parchment of graduation, and says to Christ, 'Where did you go to school?' Christ answers: 'I never graduated.' The idea of such an unheralded young man attempting to command the attention of the world! Yet no sooner

does He set His foot in the towns or cities of Judæa than everything is in commotion." Thus, all higher considerations apart for a moment, Jesus was an outcast. His family failed to give Him any sympathy in His new work. His friends and fellow-countrymen viewed Him with suspicion and hostility.

Is it any wonder that our Lord therefore longed for human companionship? In that at least He was made like unto His brethren. He knew what it was to be misunderstood. He knew the inevitable sense of estrangement and loneliness that follows. So as time went on, He sought and found friendship in unlikely places. The eager hearts of Andrew and John gave Him what others had denied, and among the bluff, unpolished, yet staunch-hearted fishers of the lake, as well as in the squalid haunts of the outcast, He, another outcast, flung off by His fellows, not for the baseness, but for the beauty of His life and character, found new friends. Perhaps it was primarily because Christ had experienced this lack of human company that He was drawn to those for whom society had no place. Certain it is that they felt He understood, and without pitying them, could sympathise and show the warmth of a loyal, disinterested regard.

Later on, as Luke narrates, "He chose twelve, whom also He named apostles." That indicates another phase of the matter. While the Master desired the friendship and human intercourse that could thus be His, He had other considerations that meant even more. He wanted those about Him who could enter into His life, who would by their cheerful companionship and understanding of His purpose, afford some relief from the critical and some-

times cruel antagonists that would confront Him. But His chief object was not to gain so much as to give. He wanted to impart the precious things of His gospel to those who could profit by His instruction, and in that way, when His own ministry came to an end, the future good of the world would be secured. Meanwhile, they were to co-operate with Him in preaching the Kingdom, and in bringing the message of hope and comfort for which the hearts of men were waiting. He knew His own physical limitations. He who was so wearied by the heat of the toilsome way that He sank by the side of the Samaritan well to rest, who on another occasion was so exhausted by His arduous labours that He fell asleep in the storm-stricken vessel on the lake, could not hope to compass the great work single-handed, and so "He chose twelve." There were others who had caught His spirit, and they too had a share in carrying the glad tidings afield, but these men of the chosen company were intended to be His intimates, and under His personal direction they were fitted for the peculiar tasks of those who were to be sent forth as messengers of the truth. That, as will be recalled, is the original meaning of the word, *apostolos*—a messenger sent with a peculiar mission.

Christ's Manifest Divinity

These men had not been long with the Master before they found that, while He was so human, without the airs and mock dignity that are assumed by those who would show their superior gifts, He was also other than an ordinary human teacher.

One thing that impressed them was His marvellous insight and His confident grasp of facts that had seemed the peculiar possession of the scribes. And yet, even there, they felt a difference. When the disciples recalled the wise and learned teachers of their faith, there was a well-remembered dreariness and unreality about their discussions that made religion not only unattractive, but actually repellent. But when Jesus talked of the great Father of mankind, it was with such an air of naturalness and sincerity that even these men, whose lives had been spent in active toil, and who in the midst of the vulgar and sordid had little aptitude to appreciate spiritual things, felt entranced.

"To believe," says Professor Bossuet, "to be religious, implies that we adopt a definite attitude towards the universe around us, one absolutely different from the uncertain views that have already been mentioned. The man who really believes penetrates, verily, to life's deepest foundations, and does not pass them by with indifference. He does not put himself in Titanic opposition to the world, nor does he indulge in weary scepticism and passive resignation. Neither, again, does he seek to delude himself over the problems of life by the illusion of the Beautiful. He accepts the universe courageously and reverently. He believes that it is a part of an intelligent unity, and he finds in it, behind it, and beyond it an absolute something which gives a final support to his life. Even more than this, faith teaches us that we are related to the profoundest reality of existence in the very depth of our being; that we may gain courage and find our soul's peace in it, and that we are permitted to call it 'Our God.' "

The Master made the abstract concrete. He clothed divine truth in human garb till it came with irresistible charm and appeal. His matchless stories were so easily grasped that the untutored were able to apprehend some of their meaning, while on the other hand, they were so profound that there were always unsounded depths for the thoughtful mind to plumb. He took the homeliest things and invested them with regal dignity. From the common ways of human life Jesus picked up the gems that other eyes had never seen, and when He held them up to the light of heaven, they flashed with the varied and scintillating rays of the diamond. The hen and her chickens illustrated the parental care of the Divine heart. The mother kneading bread, patching a torn garment, salting the sparse portion of meat, or kindling the tiny lamp that gave light at eventide, were all pressed into the service of His gospel, and we feel how well Tennyson expressed it:

> "Tho' truths in manhood darkly join,
> Deep-seated in our mystic frame,
> We yield all blessing to the name
> Of Him that made them current coin."

The disciples felt this in their own hearts. None had ever thus made things so real and so attractive. There were vistas stretching before them that their wondering eyes had never beheld before, and such wisdom, such winsomeness, made its appeal to others as well as to them. In saying this, we are paying no fulsome compliment. That were presumptuous if not profane:

"To gild refinèd gold, to paint the lily,
To throw a perfume on the violet,
To smooth the ice, or add another hue
Unto the rainbow, or with taper-light
To seek the beauteous eye of heaven to garnish,
Is wasteful and ridiculous excess."

The multitudes instinctively recognised the authentic voice of the prophet, if not of One who was the prime source of prophecy. They flocked to His ministry and hung with wondering hearts upon His words. The Sermon on the Mount was a revelation to them of what God is and what faith could be, and even after the flight of centuries, its wealth remains unexhausted and its lofty principles remain unequalled. Dr. John Watson, in *The Mind of the Master,* wrote: "What must strike every person about Jesus' sermon is that it is not metaphysical but ethical. What He lays stress upon are such points as these: the Fatherhood of God over the human family; His perpetual and beneficent providence for all His children; the excellence of simple trust in God over the earthly care of this world; the obligation of God's children to be like their Father in heaven; the paramount importance of true and holy motives; the worthlessness of a merely formal righteousness; the inestimable value of heart righteousness; forgiveness of sins dependent on our forgiving our neighbour; the fulfilling of the law, and the play of the tender and passive virtues."

Wherever Christ went, no matter what type of audience He addressed, the effects were the same. He spoke to the heart because the heart had first spoken to Him. He saw the pain and perplexity

that were written large on many a face. There were some whose "eyes were homes of silent prayer." There were others whose lives seemed to be submerged by sorrow or by the struggle for existence, while yet again, there were hearts that longed for some spiritual good that had not been discovered. A Persian writer says: "The object of all religions is alike. All men seek their beloved; and all the world is love's dwelling." While we might agree with the first statement, we might be disposed to question his description of the world. Admittedly, with more or less interest, all men seek their Beloved. The Psalmist describes his deep desire in graphic terms, likening himself to the hart, parched and faint, craving the cooling waters, and adding, "My soul thirsteth for God." And in general, it was true of those people who listened to Christ. They were aware of deep yearnings and the unsatisfactoriness of life as He spoke. They felt that here was one who talked of the highest and holiest things with a clearness and confidence they had never known before, and they made open comparisons between His methods and those of the Rabbis to whom they had listened in times past. But who dare say without some venturing to differ, that "all the world is love's dwelling"? Without the light of Christ's comforting words it would be impossible. There are now, even as in those days, grave problems clamouring for solution. There are the wicked who prosper, and the godly who suffer though innocent. There are grievous burdens that not only bow the back, but tend to crush the heart as well. And it was to some of these questions Christ addressed Himself.

It is true that when He applied the principles of His kingdom to the conditions about Him, He met with rebuke and opposition, and it has been placed on record that when He spoke of spiritual things in the terms of the material, He was sometimes misunderstood. For example, when He was speaking of Himself as the bread which came down from heaven, there was an outburst of criticism, and subsequent declension. "Many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him." But to their credit, it was then that the disciples who had been admitted into the inner circle, rightly gauged the value of His work, and when the Lord asked them, "Will ye also go away?" Peter, speaking for the others as well as himself, replied, "Lord, to whom shall we go?" With life's many disappointments and hardships, its strivings and sorrows, its sin and sighings for deliverance, we may well echo the question, "To whom shall we go?" There is none other who has the words of eternal life, of comfort and hope. We may strive to silence the voice that questions the justice and fairness of the world, bidding it be quiet as we might the child with his persistent and re-echoing, Why? But that cannot satisfy the heart, nor can it bring comfort when the soul is in dire straits. We may turn to other teachers, leaving the Scriptures as obsolete or lacking in novelty, but where shall we find the words of eternal significance and authority?

Some have sought peace in oblivion. The heart that is saddened with the ceaseless struggle with poverty seeks in the flowing bowl, some solace from its cares. The clouded brain forgets for a time its misery; it gains some kind of peace. It is a fool's

paradise because it is a temporary palliative that afterwards leaves the soul a thousand times worse. That does not alter the fact that it is the most readily sought refuge by the world-ridden, baffled and broken-hearted.

A more desperate remedy is the resort to drugs. The doping habit is no new thing. For many a year men have sought peace from their troubles in this way. To dip into De Quincey's *Confessions of an Opium-eater* is to see the folly of it all. Yet the pace is so killing, that these days see an ever-increasing movement on the part of some who lack courage to face life, to get temporary relief in this way. We cannot think of the ravages that drug-taking has made in modern times without concern. The demand for sedatives is a growing one. Nor is it wholly confined to neurotic and morbid men and women. Both drink and drugs tend to a more desperate remedy still. The time comes when drink fails to deaden the mind, and when drugs are found to lack their efficacy. Then the consequent wretchedness is so intense, that women and men are forced to find some other way. What is it? There, through the city of London, winds that noble yet by night alluring river that seems to promise peace. We have stood on the Bridge of Sighs at Waterloo, long after midnight, and tried to fathom the depths of the human soul face to face with despair. Imagine yourself, without a copper in your pocket, without a single roof in all those tens of thousands whose friendly shelter you could claim. You are cold, wet, miserable, hungry. Hungry! heart-hungry, yearning for peace and rest. Over the parapet the river glides swiftly and silently past. The lights

are reflected in its face. They shine as though denoting the entrance to a new realm where the world's tragedies and troubles no longer fret the soul. Do you wonder that there has been a splash, a gurgling cry of agonised disappointment as the soul has seen too late that this deceiver is worse than the others?

To whom shall we go for an explanation of the world in which we live? Is it only a manifestation of energy? We listen with reverence to the voice of Science wherein it is itself reverent. We are awed by the marvels of the microscope and the wonders of the telescope, but it will not do for the intelligent mind to be denied an all-wise personal Creator. The heart of man cannot be satisfied with either pantheistic or material views. Every canvas of note hanging in our galleries of Art required some genius, and the man's personality is expressed in his work. Then shall it be said that the wonderful scene that lies before our eyes as the sun gives his farewell kiss to the sea, to the sylvan glade, to the rugged rocks, needs no divine Artist? When we stand entranced beneath the spell of the moon, which makes the river gleam like a mirror of silver, and sets the hills in a shimmering ocean of light, are we beholding beauty that is simply the result of blind force? Lord Kelvin, when speaking of the adaptation of part to part in Nature, says, "Is it conceivable that the colours of the butterfly or of a beautiful flower should result from a fortuitous concourse of atoms, and having come by a fortuitous concourse of atoms, they should give pleasure, whatever that may mean, to another fortuitous concourse of atoms constituting myself? . . . The atheistic idea is so

nonsensical that I do not see how I can put it into words." The statue chiselled by the acknowledged skill of a master hand could not have "just happened." Neither could the glorious universe in which we find ourselves. Our national shrines, that stand through the centuries like poems in stone did not spring up in a night, like Jonah's gourd, and man who is the Temple of the Holy Spirit has also the evidence of the great Architect upon him. Flint says: "There must be infinitely more in God than we have any idea of. The finite mind can never stretch itself out in any direction until it is co-extensive with the Infinite Mind. Man is not the measure of God."

Christ, the Teacher of the Twelve and of the human race, has revealed the wisdom and love of the Almighty in a way that no other teacher has ever done. He pointed out the beauty that was shown by the valleys spangled with myriad flowers, like the rich embroidery on the raiment of a king; He did more, for He declared that not only did God thus clothe the grass of the field, but that man was dearer far to the Divine heart, and all that affected his happiness and welfare was of supreme moment to the Father. Can Materialism assert as much? One illustration will suffice. Strauss looked at the universe and seeing only mighty forces at work, that might well affright those who were without the faith Jesus taught, he wrote: "In the enormous machine of the universe, amid the incessant whirl and hiss of its jagged iron wheels—amid the deafening crash of its ponderous stamps and hammers—in the midst of this terrific commotion, man, a helpless and defenceless creature, finds himself placed—not secure for a moment that on some unguarded motion

a wheel may not seize and rend him, or a hammer crush him to powder. This sense of abandonment is at first very awful."

Is the light of Nature sufficient for man's guidance in life's gloom and his comfort in its tragic hours? To quote Talmage again: "Men strike their knife through this Book because they say that the light of nature is sufficient. Indeed! Have the fire-worshippers of India, cutting themselves with lancets until the blood spurts, found the light of nature sufficient? Has the Bornesian cannibal, gnawing the roasted flesh from human bones found the light of nature sufficient? Has the Chinese woman, with her foot cramped and deformed into a cow's hoof, found the light of nature sufficient? Could the ancients see heaven from the heights of Ida or Olympus? No! I call upon the pagodas of superstition, the Brahminic tortures, the infanticide of the Ganges, the bloody wheels of the Juggernaut, to prove that the light of nature is not sufficient."

Christ's Compassion Compassed Every Need

He looked life in the face. No other saw as clearly as He did, nor did any see so much. The harassed breadwinner, the widow robbed by the unscrupulous, the hireling oppressed in his wages, all found in the Man of Nazareth One who could show sympathy without appearing to patronise, and who could help the soul to help itself. Every case of injustice or of wandering from the way of right through foolish pride awoke either His anger or His pity. Lowell has described Christ's attitude

towards the oppressed and the struggling with masterly touch: the world's rulers were uncaring, and its religious men heartless in their indifference, but the Master said:

"With gates of silver and bars of gold
Ye have fenced My sheep from their Father's fold;
I have heard the dropping of their tears
In heaven these eighteen hundred years. . . .

"Then Christ sought out an artisan,
A low-browed, stunted, haggard man,
And a motherless girl, whose fingers thin
Pushed from her faintly want and sin.

"These set He in the midst of them,
And as they drew back their garment-hem,
For fear of defilement, 'Lo, here,' said He,
'The images ye have made of Me.'"

It was thus that Christ regarded the people of that day, and He who had toiled in Nazareth knew the haunting fears of want that spectre-like hovered about the common path. He understood how because anxious thought must be given to the things of time, the mind was overcharged so that it could not think of things eternal. But Peter was quite right. Christ had the words of eternal life, bidding care depart, and putting time into its rightful place. He knew the secret of serenity, and what is more, He could impart grace to the heart so that it might rise victorious over the onslaughts of adversity.

The same thing was true of the sorrows that compassed mankind. He had seen death stalk into His own home, and He knew the chill that fell upon it when His widowed mother wept over the still form

of her husband. He had seen it take the choicest of the flock, when childish laughter was silenced and the very light of life had gone out. What had He to say in the face of that dread visitant? Could He speak comfort to the broken heart, and re-kindle the lamp of happiness that had been so rudely overturned and extinguished by the careless hand of death? There are always well-meaning friends at such a time, but alas! how rarely can their words of condolence bring any real relief. When Hallam was cut down on the threshold of a great career, the blow struck Tennyson with crushing force. Their friendship was like that of Jonathan and David, and his lament is heard in spite of the sympathy that came to him:

"One writes that 'other friends remain,'
That 'loss is common to the race'—
And common is the commonplace,
And vacant chaff well-meant for grain.

"That loss is common would not make
My own less bitter, rather more:
Too common! Never morning wore
To evening, but some heart did break."

It is Christ alone who has brought life and incorruption to light through His gospel. A friend was preaching in London at the City Temple when he noticed a prominent public man in the congregation. This man had lost his only son upon the battlefield, —a son for whom he had lived, planned, toiled— and now everything he had achieved, even wealth and fame, seemed only a mockery. At the close of the service he made his way to the vestry, and with tears streaming down his face, he said, "What you

have been saying is right. When a man has received a blow such as I have, there are only three things left for him. It is either drink, despair, or God—and I am finding everything I want in God!" It was thus that the word of Christ had come to him, as it has to multitudes in their Gethsemane, strengthening and consoling and bidding them take heart again. Dr. J. D. Jones says: "Have we Christian folk laid hold of this great and mighty Gospel? Have we attained to the Christian view of death? Is not our sorrow far too unrelieved? Is there not a lack amongst us of that note of joy and triumph that goes sounding through the New Testament? Those of my readers who have read the *Memorials of Sir Edward Burne-Jones* will perhaps remember what he says about Browning's funeral. It was far too sombre to please him. 'I would have given something for a banner or two, and much would I have given if a chorister had come out of the triforium and rent the air with a trumpet.' The trumpet—with its note of defiance and triumph—was what Burne-Jones wanted to hear. And he was right. That is the instrument with which to greet death and the grave."

For every soul in straits there is some gracious word that seems meant for the particular individual who most needs it at that precise moment. To the hopeless derelict, swept by seas of passion, the Saviour comes with His word of divine forgiveness, and that very word is charged with power not only to free the soul from the shackles of the past, but to set it with new heart and high purpose on the highway of holiness. To those who are overburdened with the cares of life, He speaks a word that

at once breathes calm and quiet to the anxious spirit; while to those who sail tempestuous seas of adversity, the voice that could rebuke the turbulent waves of Galilee, can bring peace that is passing wonderful. To the blind, the halt, and the impotent, He speaks the authoritative word that brings light for darkness of soul, quickened powers for those who have stumbled in the way of right, and strength to battle and overcome to the weak and the baffled.

Truly, never man spake like this Man! He teaches as one that has authority. His words ring true because He Himself is the truth, and His supreme desire is to comfort, to redeem, and bless His brethren in the world He found so relentless and hard. Reverting to Ralph Connor's *The Sky Pilot,* we find an illustration of the sense of reality of which we speak. The young minister had succeeded in commanding the respect and support of the ranchers, but there was one who ventured to air his objections to an account of Paul's conflict with the irreconcilable element of Jerusalem. "I say, of course, that's in the Bible, ain't it? Well, how do you know it's true?" The minister began patiently to give his reasons when one of his burly supporters intervened. "Look here," he said to the youth, with a tone of authority in his voice, "How do you know anything's true? How do you know the Pilot here's true when he speaks? Can't you tell by the feel? You know by the sound of his voice, don't you?" It took a little forcible persuasion on the part of the cowboy before the young agnostic was finally and finely convinced, but beneath the somewhat uncouth argument lurks a great truth. It is "the feel" of it when the Lord Christ speaks to men

that demonstrates the trustworthiness of His words, and that makes the soul realise that here indeed is One to whom the most profound spiritual truths are familiar, and who knows both God and the soul of man as none other.

Christ's Counsel Stands Unique

With all their short-sightedness and failings, the Apostles realised that. Nicodemus had declared, "Rabbi, we know that Thou art a teacher come from God," and the Twelve came to endorse that view as they learned more of their Master. He walked on heights that were inaccessible to them, and saw the eternal verities as they had never been revealed to mortal eye. And yet He was so gracious and unassuming that they were seldom conscious of any restraint in His company. He was just one of them. Yet the most wonderful thing in their experience of the Lord was the absolute harmony evident in His life between precept and practice. Though He enunciated such apparently impossible principles for human life, they saw that He actually carried into effect the command He laid upon men. That was so unusual as to be unique. Ophelia listens to the sage counsels of her brother, and with a touch of sarcasm says:

> "I shall the effect of this good lesson keep,
> As watchman to my heart. But, good my brother,
> Do not, as some ungracious pastors do,
> Show me the steep and thorny way to heaven;
> Whiles, like a puff'd and reckless libertine
> Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads,
> And recks not his own rede."

The standards that Jesus set up for men were those by which His own life was regulated, and thus "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth."

Christ Cannot Be Classified

He is not one among the world's teachers; He is the Teacher, unique in understanding, supreme in sympathy, and unparalleled in power to bless the human soul, and it is the comfort of the Christian and the crowning glory of Christ's church that such a One is set forth for the homage and adoration of mankind. As Dr. Macfarland has pointed out, "The sovereign voice of Jesus is the ultimate authority for Christian thought and faith. Men are in question regarding the reality and nature of God, of sin, of judgment, of destiny. Where shall they turn? To the Council of Nicæa, Chalcedon, or Trent? To Calvin or Arminius? No! The supreme individual authority is Christ."

Happy is the preacher who can bring men not to hear the accents of his own voice, but to enable them to detect the tones of the living Christ speaking to their hearts as the word of life is unfolded. Happy, thrice happy he, if he can help his fellow-mortals to look beyond the channel through which the water of life comes and to reach the springs whence they flow, gushing and gladdening from the heart of the Master. That is the secret of the effective witness of those men who were His pupils for those blessed years, and who later were filled with His Spirit. They preached not themselves but Christ. They did

not obtrude their own views, but made the Master live again before the eyes of their hearers. They were as the attendant who takes you through the Cathedral of Antwerp, and who, drawing aside the curtains that veil a masterpiece, leaves you face to face with the Christ.

The world is weary with its quest for truth. It has tried substitutes for the Christian faith, but it has not found any who can speak to the heart's deep need as Christ can. And it is only as there is a return to Christ that peace can be restored to the race, and that the individual can find the strength, solace, and serenity, in which life is made noble and great. The men who have companied with Christ, who have sat at His feet and been taught the wondrous wisdom of His redemptive love, have been those who have done most for their fellows. This is suggested by the figure of one of America's most brilliant preachers and one of her noblest sons, Bishop Phillips Brooks. As we sat in the church in Boston where he laboured so magnificently, we tried to picture that saintly face in the pulpit, and to re-people the pews with the hushed multitude who there felt the presence of the Lord Himself. What was the secret of his power? The statue erected in his memory affords an explanation. There he stands, a fine commanding figure, with a quiet dignity that is regal. With the open Bible before him, he stretches out his hand in appeal to the passers-by. But there is another figure just behind, dominating the preacher with simple majesty. It is Christ. The cross still stands, but He is no longer nailed to it. He is there, living and triumphant, inspiring His servant with His presence, waiting to meet the needs of mankind,

and by His power to redeem the life from sin and equip the heart for splendid endeavour.

Such is the Master of the Twelve. When shall He be accorded His rightful place as the Master of the world? He calls us to discipleship that we may not only know the blessedness of fellowship with Him, but that we may also be instructed and inspired for truer service in the world. He will not thrust Himself upon the unwilling hearts of the race, but where there is a desire to know the mysteries of grace and the wonders of life, He is the only Teacher who can unlock the treasure-house of divine wisdom, and can lead the heart to Him, whom to know is life eternal. To whom shall we go? Where shall the world find balm for its many wounds, or the troubled find reassurance and calm? Where shall the sin-laden and the despairing find pardon and hope? Where shall the toiling multitudes whose way is difficult, and the ambitious, adventurous reformer who treads the path perilous, find the grace that will be sufficient for their needs? There is only one answer: In Him who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Those who tread the road of discipleship shall know the delight of intimacy with the Master. Learning of Him, they shall find rest unto their souls. They shall be enabled to reflect the radiance of His life, and sharing His travail, at last shall know the joy of the triumphant host who see the King in His beauty, and are blessed for evermore.

THE END

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The Master and the twelve

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